Week ending March 24 1951 Every Thursday Threepence

John Bull

"FESTIVAL AT FARBRIDGE"

by J. B. PRIESTLEY

WHITE SQUAW: by Margaret Cheechoo

True life story of an English girl who married a Red Indian

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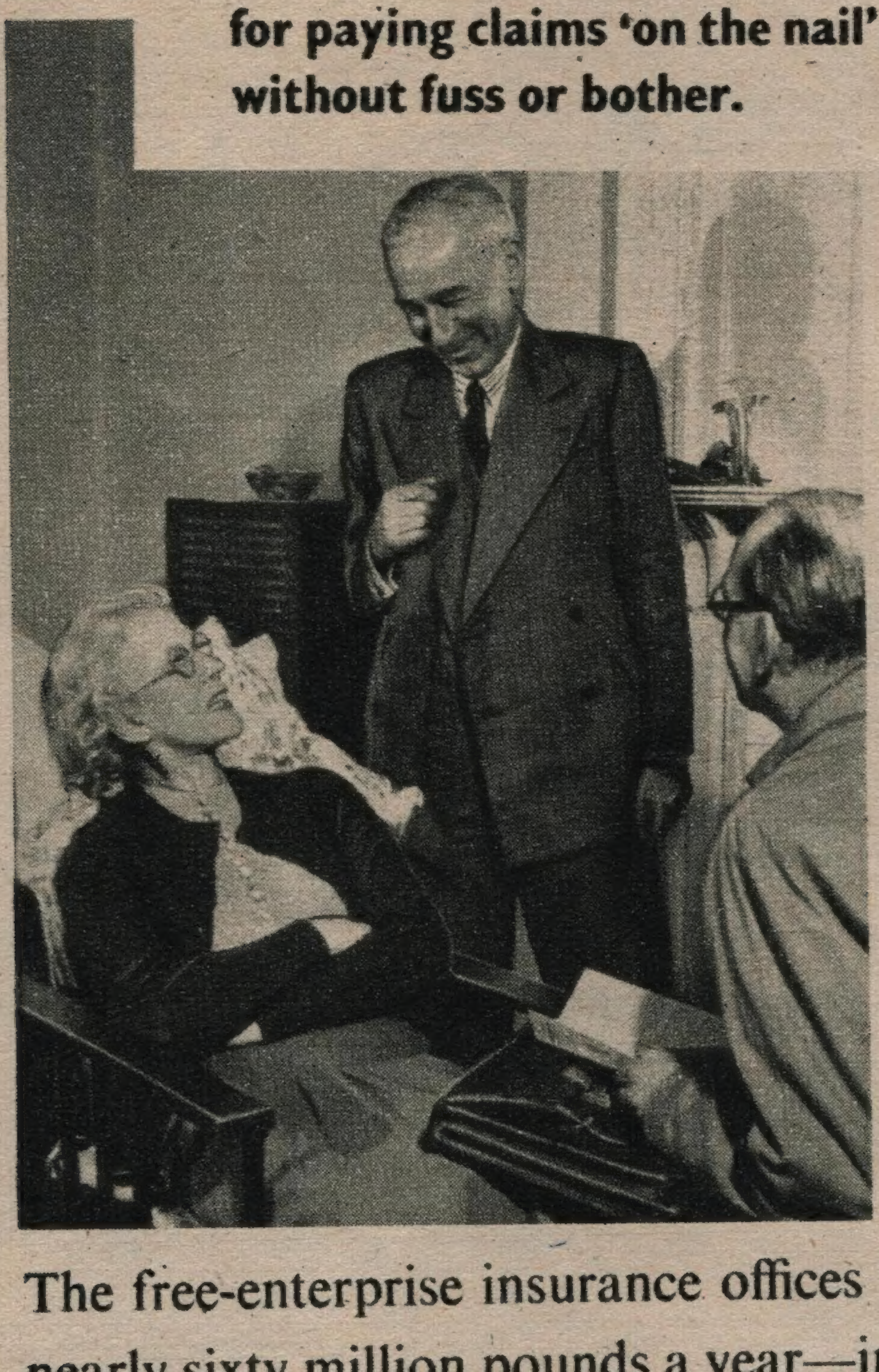

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Wives whose husbands have to go places!

TWICE A WEEK at least, market gardener Tony Simmons and his wife go up to Covent Garden at 4.30 a.m. Back home at 7, he has breakfast and is busy at the garden by 7.45. "I can't afford to slack off," he says. "And after breakfast with Kellogg's Corn Flakes I can keep hard at it all morning."

"A GOOD START is half the battle," says Mrs. Simmons, of St. Albans. "I make sure my husband is well fed by giving him Kellogg's with his breakfast."

"If he's to do a good job he must have a SATISFYING BREAKFAST"

"Kellogg's help to keep him going," *says Mrs. Tony Simmons*

Mrs. Simmons knows that if her husband is to do a long, hard morning's work on top of an early trip to Covent Garden he must have a proper breakfast. She always serves Kellogg's Corn Flakes with his first meal, because they help to give him the staying power he needs.

"Hidden Hunger"

One of the reasons why a man sometimes begins to tire and lose his "go" an hour before midday is simply that "hidden hunger" gets him down. He didn't eat enough at breakfast to last him until his next meal.

No fear of "hidden hunger" attacking Mr. Simmons! His wife includes ready-to-serve Kellogg's Corn Flakes, and milk and sugar, with his breakfast. She knows then he is able to tackle his strenuous job without flagging.

JANET (4) lends mother a hand! Mrs. Simmons serves a popular, satisfying breakfast of fruit or fruit juice, Kellogg's (with milk and sugar), bread, butter, and a beverage. "When they have a proper breakfast like this," says Mrs. Simmons, "I know they've got enough energy to see them through the morning."

'Family' Size 1/2d.

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FLAKES
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EDITORIAL

Here is the huge account that the Budget must settle

DURING THE financial year which is just coming to an end, Great Britain will have spent the enormous sum of £3,500,000,000.

Fortunately, the Government budgeted last April for a surplus of £442,000,000, mainly to lessen the dangers of inflation. So, because of this, there is no big deficit on the current year to make good.

It looks as if the national revenue this year will yield £3,900,000,000 at least, and probably some millions more. Which means that we are likely to end the financial year, on paper, approximately £400,000,000 to the good.

Thus we will have got through a very difficult year and emerged with a reasonable balance in spite of having had to spend at least £200,000,000 *more* on defence than the £780,000,000 allocated for that purpose.

All this sounds quite encouraging. But these huge figures — staggering and scarcely comprehensible as they are to the ordinary individual—are only a foretaste of what we have to face in the new financial year beginning in April. And they give only a slight indication of the formidable task confronting the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Gaitskell, in the Budget which he must present to Parliament early next month.

As always happens at pre-Budget time, many people are giving Mr. Gaitskell advice—both official and unofficial—on what he ought to do. Most of it boils down to this: "Everything will be all right if you tax somebody else; not me."

But the first essential to grasp, if you are going to express your views about a Budget, is its background.

The background of the 1951 Budget is easy enough to understand, in broad outline.

THE first fact is this—and it is impossible to evade: In the year beginning on April 5, we shall have to spend about £1,300,000,000 on defence.

When this is added to the other sums estimated by the various Government Departments, it looks as if the Chancellor will have to find revenues to meet a total bill of about £4,200,000,000. (Which makes the £3,500,000,000 of the current year already look smaller.)

On the basis of present taxation, he can expect to get only about £3,900,000,000 in revenue, leaving a gap of £300,000,000. Nor is this the whole story, for there are other outgoings to be met, such as war damage payments and grants to local authorities. These will amount to at least as much again.

The grand total of extra money to be found by the Budget is therefore around £600,000,000.

It has been suggested that the Chancellor should tap new and novel sources of revenue to balance the nation's accounts, but they could not, in the nature of things, yield very much.

Therefore he is likely to concentrate on those sources—tested by experience—which are already available. He could, for example, raise the standard rate of income tax to the wartime level of 10s. in the £, and make other adjustments in allowances, which would bring him in about £165,000,000 in additional revenue. He could, too, increase the duty on football pools and make changes in the incidence of purchase tax intended both to obtain extra funds and discourage spending on goods required for export.

WILL he, also, take steps to reduce expenditure? And, if so, in what directions will the axe fall?

Any economies which may be introduced will obviously be the cause of heated political argument.

There should certainly be no attempt to save money at the expense of the old age pensioner or the disabled ex-Serviceman. In fact, as soon as the country can afford it, the rates of benefit should be increased, rather than cut, to keep them abreast of the rise in living costs.

Economies in the social services might save a million here and a million or two there, but could not add up to a figure which would offset much of the £600,000,000 deficit. And there is always the danger that such economies would, in the long run, inflict the most hardship on the people least able to bear it.

The brutal fact is that the bulk of the extra money will have to be found either by taxation or by borrowing.

The wisest course for the Chancellor will probably prove to be a combination of the two: some new taxes, some new borrowing. (For instance, there is no reason why he should not borrow the money it is proposed to spend on stockpiling raw materials during 1951-52.)

For the taxpayer, the only real comfort lies in the thought that this blitz on our pockets is for the specific purpose of avoiding another world war—which, if it came, would cost us catastrophically more in every imaginable way.

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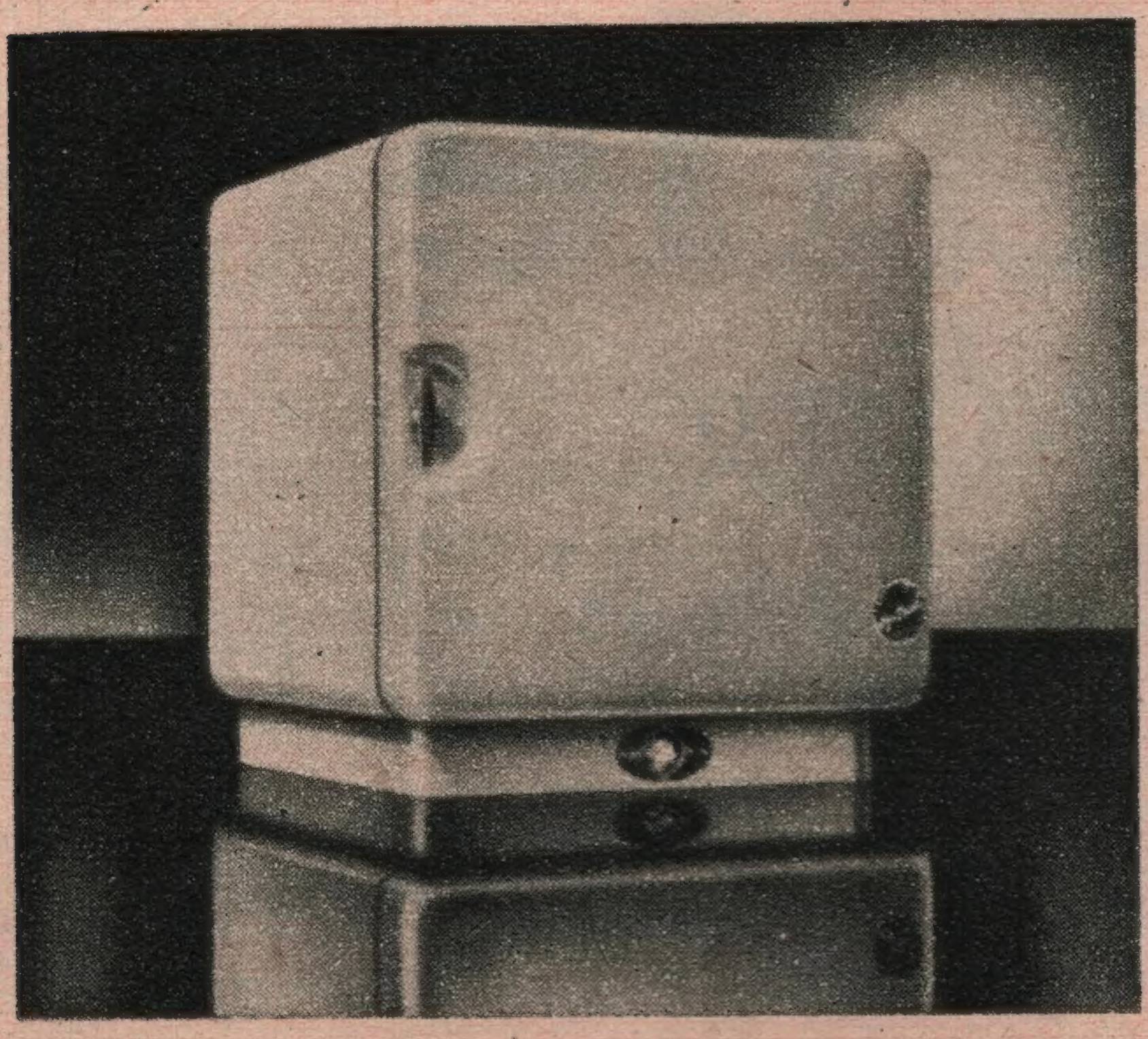

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MARCH 24, 1951 VOL. 89 No. 2334 PHONE: TEMPLE BAR 2468 GRAMS: HEROICALLY, WESTCENT, LONDON

FREE SPEECH

Are these the short cuts to promotion?

PROMOTION IN ANY JOB these days is not a matter of good work but of nepotism. To mix in the circle most likely to step you up, you must frequent the right public house or church, be an accomplished footballer or cricketer—so that you can play for the works team—or shine as an entertainer—so that you can do a star turn in the concert party.

The crane man who wrote that he cannot understand why some men are promoted ("Free Speech," March 3) will find it is the same everywhere. A good, conscientious worker is hard to replace; he cannot be spared from the job in hand. That is why it is the wheedlers who get on.—W. HACKWELL, 118 Tootal Drive, Weaste, Salford, Lancs.

At The Weather's Mercy

WHY DO FARMERS take so little care of their implements and machinery? On a trip through the West Country, I saw countless tractors, seed-drills and harvesters standing in the fields, open to all weathers, without even a sheet or tarpaulin for protection.—W. H. FORD, 2 Cotswold Crest, Stow-on-the-Wold, Glos.

Young Men In Duffle Coats

HOW I DETEST the craze for duffle coats among our young men! Significantly, the garment in most cases completes an ensemble which includes uncut hair and uncleaned shoes; in fact, it seems to symbolize our moderns' "couldn't care less" attitude. I have personal wartime recollections of the value of the duffle in the Arctic Circle and other below-zero regions, but feel that here and now they are, like the unkempt and shaggy heads of their present wearers, just a le-eetle superfluous.—F. N. LLOYD, 7 Sutton Grove, Shrewsbury.

The Gatecrashers

FROM THE PAYBOX of the cinema where I work, it appals me to see the crowds of children who come twice a week at a time when they ought to be in bed. If an "A" film is showing and I refuse to admit them, they hang around outside, pestering adults to take them in. What are parents thinking of to allow these children to see films which are often frightening and horribly sadistic? Being the mother of two young children, it grieves me to contemplate the effect some films must have on susceptible minds.—R. C. S., Leicestershire.

Silver Lining

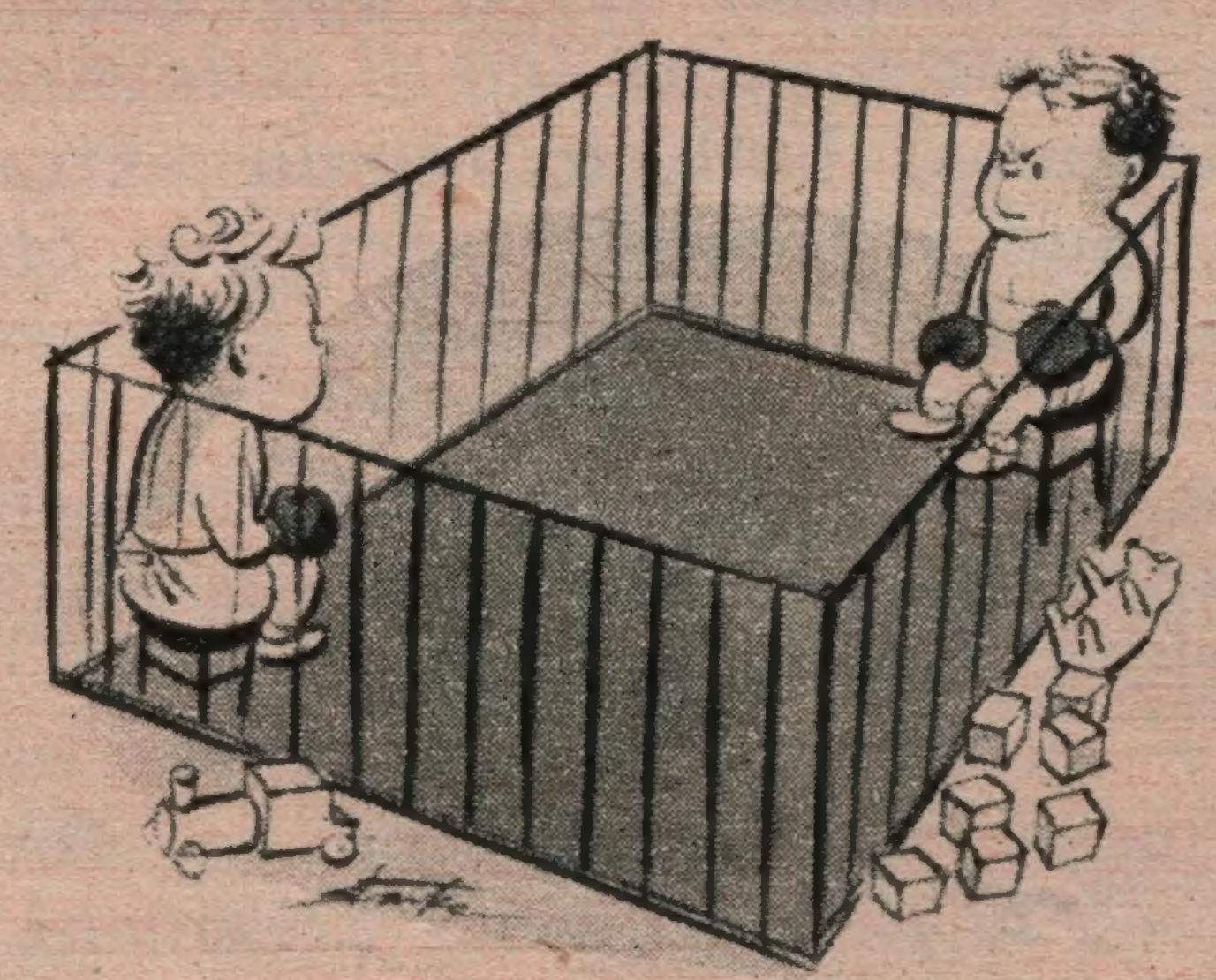
HERE IS ONE WAY of saving, which we have tried out in our office. Each day we all pay a penny if the weather is fine, twopence if it rains, threepence if it is foggy and fourpence if it snows. So far this year we have each saved well over ten shillings and not missed it.—R. E. PRIOR, 6 Belmont Avenue, Breaston, Derbyshire.

Smoke Your Own

WITH THE PROSPECT of a further increase in the tobacco tax, isn't it about time that a "Smoke your own" rule was adopted? Many an undesired cigarette is smoked just to be sociable and many a good resolution to give up the habit altogether has been spoilt by an over-generous friend. — W. W. MCMAHON, 13 St. Philips Avenue, Litherland, Liverpool, 21.

The Champ, Aged Three

AFTER WATCHING my three-year-old son "playing" with his brother, aged four, I swear that fighters are born, not made. Wrestling seems natural to my younger son. He tackles his brother as a footballer does an opponent—round the knees, to bring him crashing to the floor. Two nights ago they were having great fun, racing round the living-room and pulling each other around. The fun stopped short, however, when the wee one, after getting the elder boy on his back, took a running jump and landed in a sitting position on his brother's tummy. He now clenches his small fists and tries to box.—M. G. HUTCHINSON, 181 Burnbrae Street, Glasgow.



Getting Into University

FOUR MONTHS AGO, I sat for scholarship examinations. At an Oxford college I was elected to an Open Exhibition in English. From my own experience, I would challenge the "qualifications" listed by "Oxonian" as necessary for entrance to a university ("Free Speech," March 3). I have no interest in any form of sport; I know no one to pull strings; at my short interviews I displayed no wit, much as I desired to do so; and my testimonial was from a clergyman, entirely unconnected with my school or the university. Either I was very lucky or (as I prefer to think) our universities are unbiased judges of ability.—OXONIAN-ELECT, Shropshire.

. . . The principles, if any, which govern admission to universities are baffling. I failed Higher School Certificate twice, but was accepted to read medicine (a most competitive faculty in any university). Perhaps the authorities merely look at the photographs on the application forms.—R. V. B., Essex.

Swan That Was Grounded

DURING A COUNTRY WALK, my children and I saw a swan stranded in marshy ground some distance from the river. We suspected it was hurt. Each time we approached it, the swan hissed like a snake, so we kept our distance. Then along came an Automobile Association scout. Undismayed by the swan's bellicosity, he prodded it gently with a stick, and, when it had risen on its feet—it seemed stiff with cramp—he lifted it bodily on to the path. Then he carried it right to the river's edge and slid it in, whereupon the swan sailed gracefully away. We thought it all very gallant of the Knight of the Road.—MRS. T. M., Pembrokeshire.

An Invalid's Plea

CANNOT THE MAKERS go a stage further with invalid chairs and turn them into small closed-in "cars"? Invalid chair users like myself—I am paralysed from the waist down—are exposed to all weathers and are the object of people's curiosity.—SUFFERER, N. Ireland.

The Invaders Speak Welsh

WE WELSH HAVE a name for the onion sellers of Brittany, mentioned in Jerome Willis's JOHN BULL article, "Onion Invaders." We call them "shoni winons." They have no difficulty selling their wares around this way, for they can speak fluent Welsh. One told me that in some parts of Brittany only Welsh is spoken.—MRS. E. EVANS, 60 Yniswen Terrace, Penycal, Swansea.

The onion sellers' "fluent Welsh" is Breton, included with Cornish and Welsh in Brythonic, a Celtic dialect.

Letters From Oconomowoc

LIKE MRS. FLORENCE PARFITT ("Free Speech," February 24), I am in constant touch by correspondence with an American woman. She lives in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. Both she and I were schoolteachers before we married. Her latest letters have introduced a thirteen-year-old American boy to my son, also thirteen, and an eight-year-old American girl to my daughter of that age.—MRS. RUBY SOWERBY, 21 Mount Grove, Dunston-on-Tyne, Co. Durham.

Two Boys On A Bus

THE TWO OF US, who go to a public school, were on a bus which was full. We stood up for two elderly ladies. We were told to sit down by the conductor, stared at incredulously by the other passengers, and made to look silly. So this is the public that pronounces the younger generation impolite!—HUGH LEWIS (thirteen), PAUL HUTCHINGS (thirteen), Cliffe, Kent.

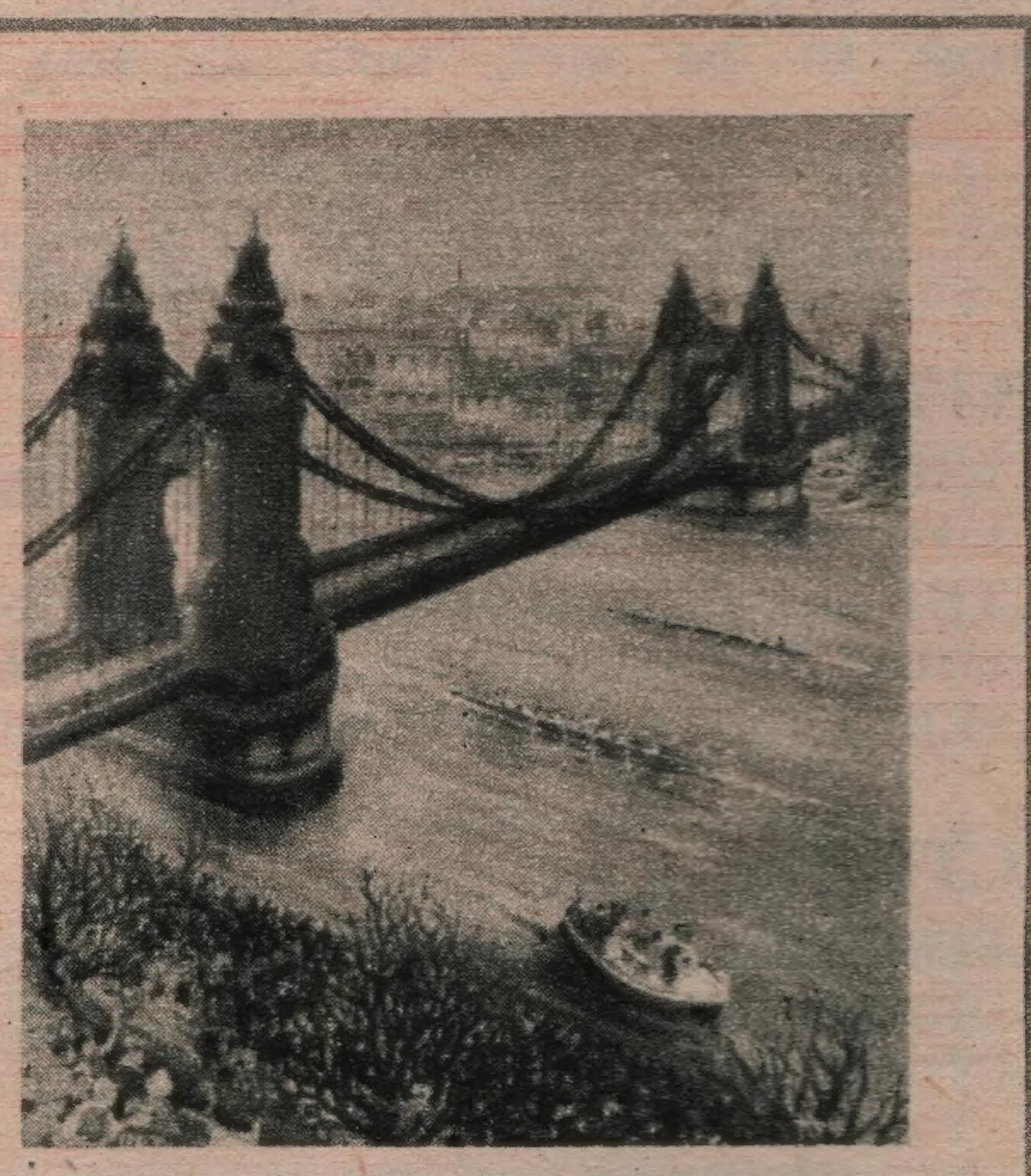
After The Mirror Smashed

WHEN A LARGE MIRROR in our hall fell and broke into many pieces, my son immediately said: "Seven years' bad luck." So did neighbours who called later. The following Saturday I won £1,181 in a football pool. So much for superstition.—E. J., Sevenoaks, Kent.

John Bull welcomes readers' views, experiences and ideas for publication. A guinea is paid for every letter used. Mark the envelope "Free Speech" and make sure your full name and address are in the letter.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

THIS bird's-eye view of the Boat Race—the crews are just passing under Hammersmith Bridge—is by Robert Muir Dundas Robertson, or "Rob" for short. A fifty-two year old Scot, he spent his early life in Canada, studying at the Ontario College of Art. He now lives in Surrey. Chief among his hobbies is "to relax with the *Financial Times* and study the form on the stock market."



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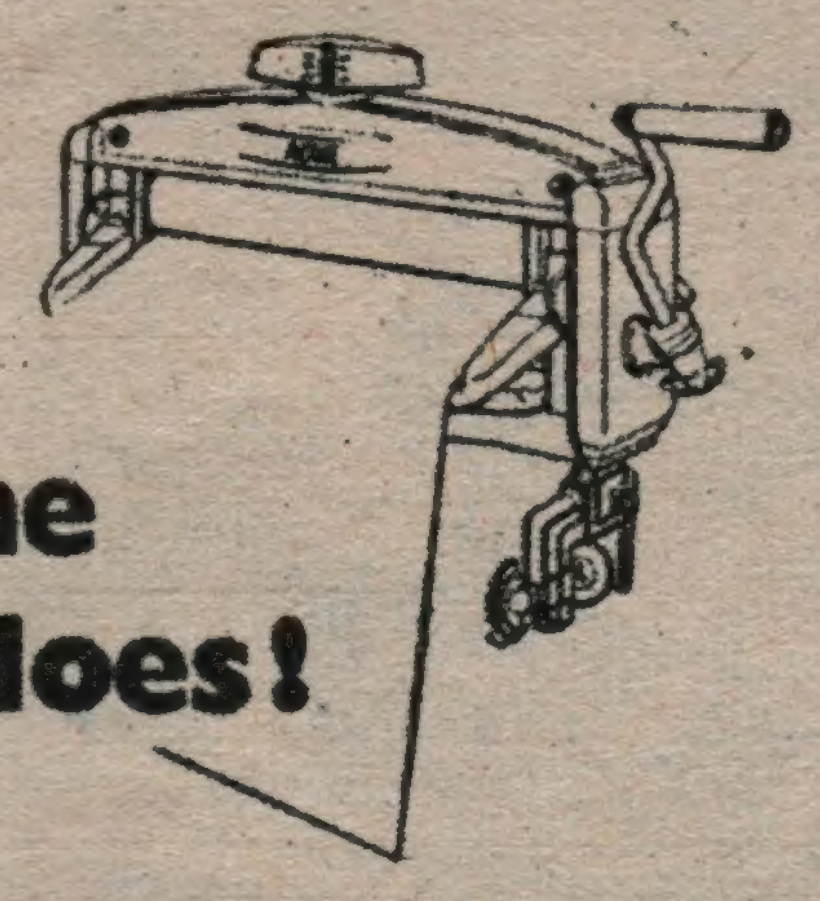

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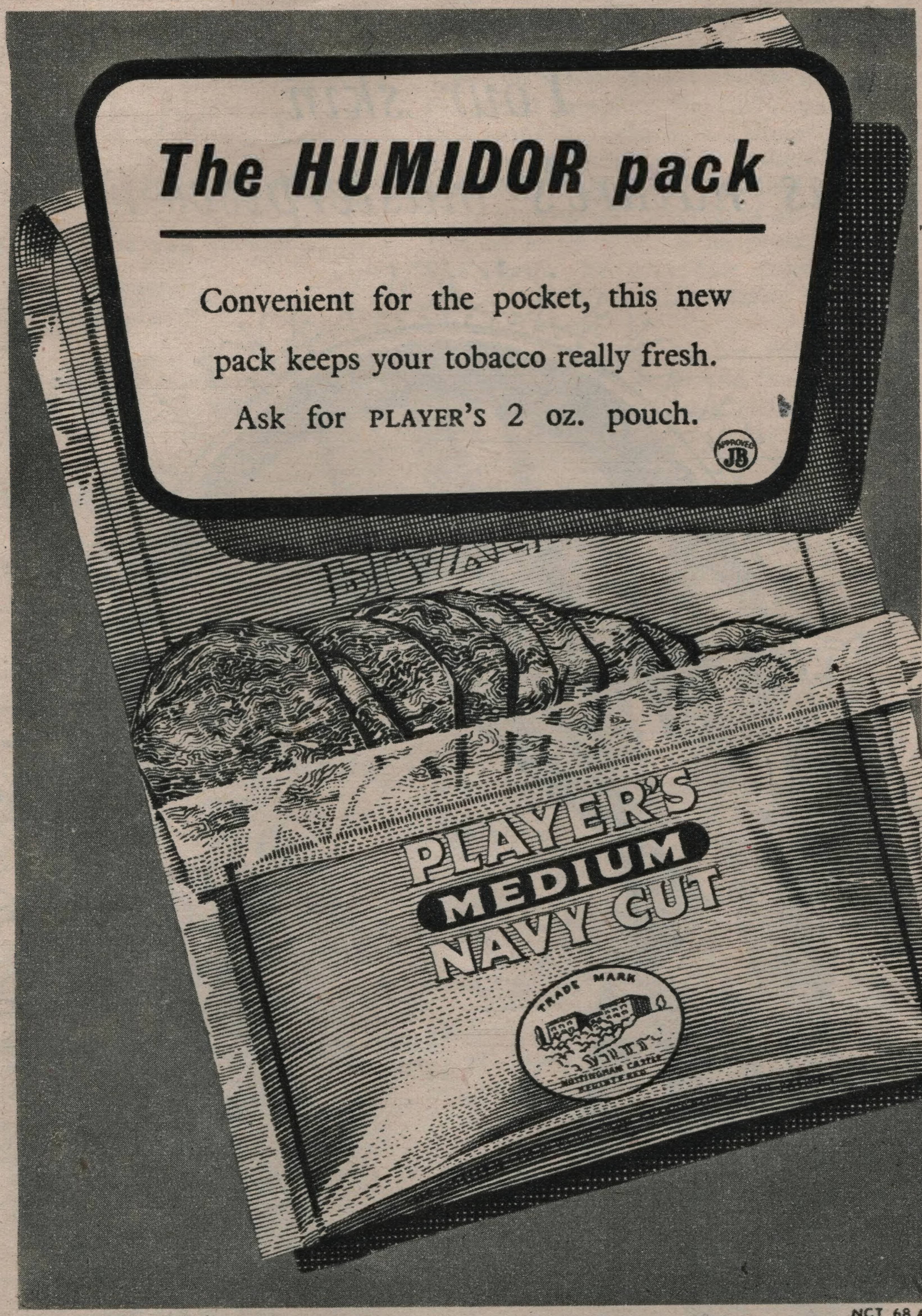

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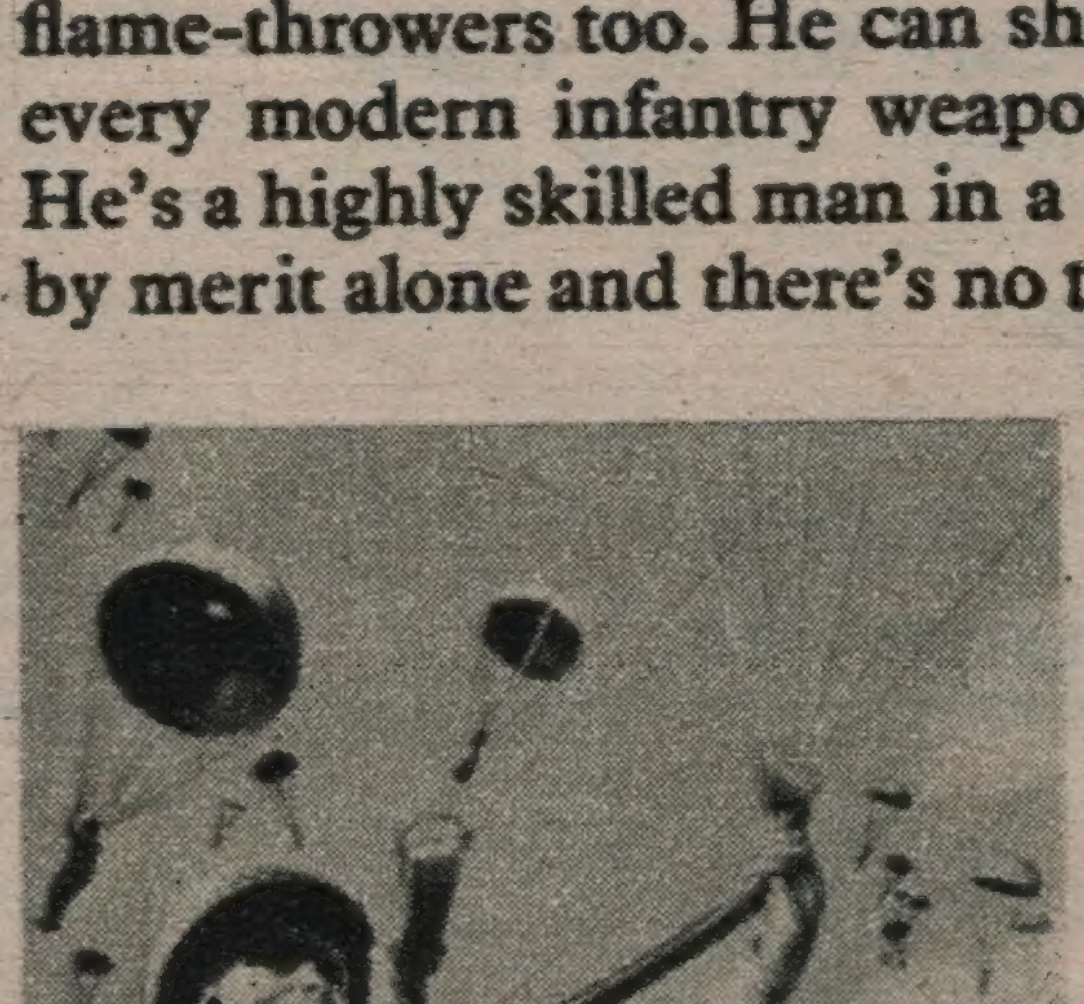
Think you could learn to drive a tank? Of course you could. But could you learn, on top of that, to be what a Tank man *has* to be? First-class wireless operator—in a tank battened down and taking rough country as it comes? First-class machine gunner? Crack shot with a high-velocity 20-pounder? Flame-thrower gunner—with all the technical skill that job demands? Quick, accurate map reader? You could? Well—no promises, for they pick and choose. But they *are* picking their men from chaps like you.

Footslogging? That term's a bit out of date. The infantryman of today has changed with the times. He can drive a fast tracked carrier. He's an expert in the use of the walkie-talkie. He's at home with light and medium machine guns—and portable flame-throwers too. He can shoot fast and shoot straight with every modern infantry weapon, including the anti-tank gun. He's a highly skilled man in a skilled job—where promotion's by merit alone and there's no top limit!



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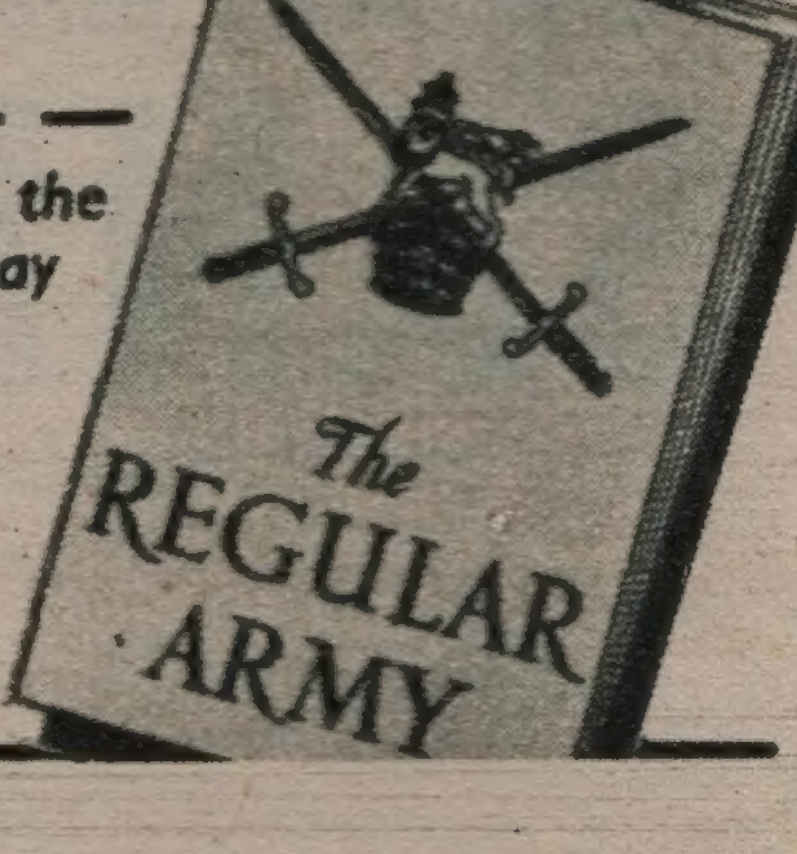

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Margaret and her husband, a Swampy Cree Indian. They courted in temperatures below zero; married against the wishes of the local white "memsahibs"

WHITE SQUAW

by *MARGARET CHEECHOO*

A young English girl went to Canada to live and work among the Red Indians—and married an Indian Brave.... Here is the first part of her moving personal chronicle—a story of strange adventures and of a loyalty that survived prejudice and great hardship

CANADA WAS PURE WHITE through the double glass windows of the rickety old railway carriage rumbling along towards Cochrane. It was late afternoon and a rather jaundiced sunlight glinted off the tips of Christmas trees stretching for miles on either side of the track. On the tops of bushes the crusted snow looked like sugar—enough to keep everybody going in Britain for at least a thousand years.

Ours was a lumbering, good-natured, old-fashioned carriage, with oil lamps fitted to the ceiling. Besides Sinclair and me, the only other occupants were an old Indian trapper and his wife, both smoking quietly farther up in front. With freight-cars hooked on at the back, and the train stopping at the small settlements and taking on passengers and more freight all along the way, it was a pretty rough ride. But I was far too excited to think about being uncomfortable. Sinclair and I were going to Cochrane to get married.

Sinclair was wearing his tartan lumber jacket, ski trousers and rubber boots laced up above the ankles. We were nearing the end of our journey when I noticed three particularly anxious wrinkles on his forehead clouding his expression: perhaps the universal whiteness of Canada had made him feel a little uncertain about the prospect of our marriage, because he turned and looked at me. Buildings were now flashing past the window; the train was slowing down and a few figures on the station platform were waving their arms energetically.

"We've arrived," I said. He did not move. "We'd better look slippy if we don't want to be taken on."

"You still want to marry with me, Margaret?" he asked. "I not chief's son. I just Indian boy."

Sinclair's skin is a light autumn copper; he is one of the Swampy Cree tribe from the delta of the Moose River; his family name is Cheechoo.

Cheechoo! That would take some getting used to. I could imagine people at home in Epsom, Surrey, asking for news of me, and my mother saying quietly: "Margaret's married now. Her husband is a Red Indian by the name of Cheechoo."

Friends Would Wonder Why

Even our most loyal friends would have to admit it sounded funny to English ears. Of course, mummy would show them Sinclair's photograph, and they would probably say he looked nice, quite handsome in his special way, but they would not know him. Some were sure to wonder why Margaret Dolman had not looked for a husband of her own sort, instead of going up to the Hudson Bay and nabbing a Swampy Cree who had never been out of the bush and who had never seen houses built in a row in his life.

One thing they certainly would not understand was what it felt like to be going through with it, against the advice and opposition of practically every white person in the colony in which we had been living, in the face of doubts and uncertainties which were tainting those moments that I had once dreamed would be the happiest in my life.

"Your children will be half-breeds," I could remember one woman saying; and myself replying tartly: "No, Indians—Treaty Indians, because children take their father's nationality. Not poor little half-breeds, without the white man's prestige and the Indian's privileges."

"He'll make your life a hell," she had added. "They are sly and deceitful; you never know what they're thinking. Don't say you weren't warned."

All I was certain of was that I loved Sinclair. I could not have stood those last few months otherwise. After what had happened I could only think back with shame of the white race to which I belonged, and in particular of the white memsahibs whose inhumanity I had thought was encountered only in the East. I did not want to hear another word preached in a Christian church about the brotherhood of man or the story that all men were equal in the sight of God, because I had found the people who preached that from the pulpit advised differently outside. Perhaps what I was about to do was something wrong, letting my race down, as a white woman had suggested. Perhaps I was too young to understand the consequences, but it was my life to lead and maybe spend regretting. There was time enough to judge. . . .

I think *Hiawatha* must have first put thoughts of Indians into my head. I was twelve or thirteen then, and I started searching the library for books on Red Indians and the other coloured peoples. I read them all avidly; and I remember my mother remarking that if I applied myself as well to school subjects I would do much better. My chief interest was in the northern territories of Canada, and by the time I was seventeen I had decided to emigrate there.

My mother was neither for nor against it. What she said was: "Wait a couple of years, then if you still want to go let me see anybody trying to stop you!" That was mummy all over—kind, sensible and a loyal champion. So I went into the Land Army, saved for two years, and asked her again. She kept her word. My father agreed that if my heart was set on it I would not be happy doing anything else.

I was corresponding with a pen friend in Southern Ontario: a man named William Kendall, who worked on an Indian reserve and was married to an Indian. He advised me to apply to the Indian Schools Administration, and they replied offering me a job as a general assistant at fifty dollars a month all found in Bishop Horden School at Moose Factory, Northern Ontario. I accepted, and three weeks later, on April 18, 1949, my father and my elder brother Norman drove me to Southampton to wave goodbye from the dock.

Daddy was waving a newspaper. He kept waving it until we were far out, and when he stopped I was suddenly very lonely. I was nineteen and I had left the family nest. From then on I would have to think everything out and decide for myself, and stand the racket for my mistakes. All I had was my luggage and £40.

Sightseeing In Toronto

The ship docked at Halifax and two days later I was in Toronto. There I stayed three days at the Salvation Army hostel, for fifty cents bed and breakfast, and spent the time shop-window gazing. On the Sunday afternoon I went on a sightseeing trip in a steamer that prowled round all the lovely islands in the bay. That evening a train took me north again to Cochrane, and onwards another two hundred miles to the railhead, Moosonee. From here, I had been told, I would have to complete the rest of my journey by canoe.

Back in Toronto, somebody had described Moosonee as a one-horse town where the going was rough. All it possessed, I was told, were a few wooden houses, a Hudson's Bay Company store, a Roman Catholic church and hospital, an Anglican church and day school, a post office and a pool room for Indians.

As I alighted from the train at Moosonee Station, I saw two men who looked as though they were waiting to meet somebody. One was a dapper little man in his thirties with rimless spectacles; the other a bushy young fellow with a fine swarthy skin, black hair and eyes and obviously the first Indian I had ever seen.

The dapper little man said: "Miss Dolman?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Good evening. I'm the principal of Bishop Horden's," he said, introducing himself. "This is Andrew Fairies, the male assistant. We've come to escort you back."

Andrew Fairies picked up my baggage and led the way out of the station. We were picking our way across a muddy road and along a raised wooden sidewalk above the level of the slush, when the principal touched my arm. "Miss Dolman, I have news for you. We have something better to offer you than female assistant. You will be our girls' supervisor!" The way he said it, I felt as if he had conferred on me some distinguished foreign decoration. I thanked him, promising to do my best.

We had reached the river bank, where a canoe was lying on its side, with an outboard motor sticking out of the stern. At this spot the Moose River widens and separates into several channels that fan out around a number of large, wooded islands. One of these islands, Moose Factory, was our destination. In the winter the river surface freezes hard and you can drive across; but the break-up had happened only a week before and there were still a number of stray ice pans swinging swiftly downstream.

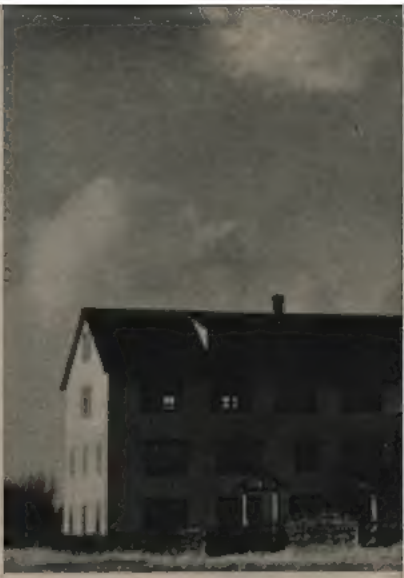
The Crowd At The Window

Andrew Fairies had to be careful. Half-way across he stopped the motor and he and another Indian paddled until we ran aground on Moose Factory's beach. It was getting dark, and I could see lights blazing in a large building, its windows crowded with lively little silhouettes leaning out and waving. "Your charges," the principal said. "It's time they were in bed."

Bishop Horden's was a wooden building of four storeys, with its top windows gabled, a large bell surmounting one end of the roof to proclaim it a school, and a cross above the bell to define it as Christian. It catered for the children of half a dozen Indian settlements dotted along the coast of James Bay, at the mouth of the Moose River. That year the school complement was ninety-seven children between six and sixteen. Of this number forty-three were girls and my charges, who had to find in me something of a foster-mother, elder sister, medical adviser, mentor and general confidante. Save during school hours, I was responsible for their behaviour, habits and entertainment.

Looking after them was a whole-day job, because lessons were often irregular, and there was always somebody not attending class for some reason or other. At playtime, if the weather was bearable, they played games like baseball and volley ball, or enjoyed themselves on the swings and seesaws. In bad weather they played indoors. We would move aside the tables in the dining-room. I would strum on the piano and they would sing in their characteristic way, slurring melodically from one note to another. They loved the slow, easy-going cowboy songs of the West, but they danced a quick, saucy jig, tapping heels and toes, for which I found only the "Irish Washerwoman" fast enough.

Emma, the Blackfoot Indian. Her touching farewell "speech" left Margaret ashamed



Margaret's destination, Bishop Horden School.

They were no different as a bunch from any other children I have known; if anything, easier to handle than English children and rather shy until they know you better. Boys and girls did not mix, but that did not prevent any of the long-distance school "crushes." They spoke Cree among themselves, but their lessons were in English. Everybody's pet was little Johnnie Pans, an orphan of about four. Johnnie was too young to hold his own among the boys, so the senior girls and I took care of him. Poor Johnnie. He hated turning five and being sent among the "men."

Girls Left, Boys Right

On Sundays I would march them to the little Anglican church standing amid neat clusters of white wooden crosses and headstones. The girls would lead the way, with Harris Glen, the boy's supervisor, following with the boys. Then they filed into the church, into the brown, varnished benches, girls on the left, boys on the right, behind the first three benches reserved for the white staff of the school and the community's church-going whites, and ahead of the Indians crowding humbly into the back seats.

I knelt behind my girls, to keep an eye on all of them, and from there I could study the common-room personalities. Bishop Horden's was certainly not the Harrow of Canada. Its staff was mainly young and inexperienced, nice enough as individuals, but hardly burning with the missionary zeal to live and work among Indians that had brought me 7,000 miles from my own comfortable home in Epsom. Looking back, I can only judge them gently; their mistakes were not what they did, but what they did not do. But their turnover was rapid, so I doubt if any single person could have left much of an impression, save one—the matron. Margaret Rutherford was a smart, attractive Canadian woman in her thirties, who worked hard and was really wonderful with the children.

My real friends were the Indian members of the staff—Annie Fairies, Andrew's dumpy little wife, who was the school cook; Ruby Fairies, Andy's sister, a smart, pretty girl of nineteen; and Margo Gull, a full-blooded Cree, who had spent five years working in Ottawa and had returned assured and sophisticated, with perfume, nail varnish, wedge-heeled shoes and her head full of the latest song hits.

Margo was the first to take me to an Indian house in the village; it was something I had been wanting to do ever since I had come to Moose Factory, but I had been told I was crazy each time I had suggested it. Margo had a friend in the village named Rachael Cheechoo. Margo wanted to see her, and as I desperately wanted

A canoe's ride from railhead—and 7,000 miles away from home

Some of Margaret's charges. In her arms is Johnnie Pans, the orphan

to see how Indians lived in their homes, I asked if I could come along.

The farthest afield I had been on the island was walking past the Anglican church and the archdeacon's house. I had visited the Hudson's Bay Company's store, and occasionally I had been to the Stirling Construction Company's cinema shows. Once or twice I had gone with the white staff to drink tea and make small talk with the Moose Factory coterie of white wives. These were prim, snobbish and lifeless evenings, in which each female was patronized and in turn patronized the one just below her in the social ladder.

The Indian village is huddled in a clearing in the southern part of the island. It's a rickety little village of log cabins and tents and an occasional wooden house, with a veranda, a single living-room and two bedrooms upstairs. Margo's friend, Rachael Cheechoo, lived in a one-room cabin which she shared with her husband, their baby boy, her young sister and her husband's grandfather and grandmother. The baby's name was Garry. I was playing with him when the door opened and a young man came in and was introduced as Rachael's cousin, Sinclair. He crouched somewhere on the floor near the stove. I don't remember much of him then, save that he kept laughing at everything I said. I might have studied him more closely had I known that in a few months he would be my husband.

A few days later one of the white mem-sahibs met me at the store and told me I had been the first white girl to set foot in the Indian village, which was a very unwise thing to do.

"How am I to learn about Indians if I don't see them at home?" I asked. "After all, I have to look after their children. Besides, I thought they were very nice people. If they are kind enough to invite me again I shall certainly not refuse." She seemed rather taken aback; there was something about her expression which suggested that I had not heard the last of it.

On The Carpet

A couple of weeks later I was summoned to the principal's office. The principal paced the carpet, rising up on his toes with each step.

". . . you mustn't think, Miss Dolman, that we are in any way dissatisfied with your work," he was saying. "You have been one of the finest supervisors this school has ever had, and I said so to the authorities. Well, here's their reply. They're offering you something far, far better than your present position in Bishop Horden's. I'd jump at it if I were you. . . ."

Something far, far better was the post of laundry matron at St. Paul's Anglican Mission School, in the Alberta Blood Indian Reserve, just outside Cardston at the foot of the Rockies. Two thousand miles of prairie separates it from Moosonee. It was a bigger school than the one I had just come from, and it catered for many more children. But the Blood Indians (a branch of the Blackfoot) were farmers who lived in farms scattered over an endlessly flat and uninspiring country; they were certainly far too remote for me to attempt anything as unwise as going to visit them.

I couldn't settle down at St. Paul's. As laundry matron I was completely out of touch with the children, and the work was tedious and frustrating. I was still corresponding regularly with my pen friend in the Southern Ontario reserve, and made no secret of the fact that I could have been in an English school for all the contact I had with the Indians, whom I had come to serve. Mr. Kendall, who was eighty-two, did not advise me directly to take the step I did, but there was something about his letters that made me feel better when I had taken the plunge. If I could not work for Indians, I could at least live and work among them. I don't think he was surprised when I told him I had given the school a month's notice.

"Me Sorry You Go"

The only one at St. Paul's who seemed to mind was an old Indian woman called Emma, who used to sit near the door in the kitchen for ever peeling potatoes. She knew only two words of English—"Good morning"—and I could speak no Blackfoot at all, but we had got on wonderfully together. The day I left, she handed me a pair of moccasin brooches and said something in English she must have been rehearsing for days. "Me very sorry you go," she said. Unable to thank her in Blackfoot, I felt suddenly dumb and ashamed.

At Cardston I boarded an eastward-bound train. I had decided to go back to Moose Factory, where Ruby Fairies had written to say I could stay with her family in the village and try for a job on the island. Jobs were uncertain, but I could live the way the Indians did, and if they managed to survive, why shouldn't I?

November 2 was the bleakest and most miserable afternoon of the year, and I picked it to arrive at Moosonee. It had been snowing and the tracks were clogged with slush, for which I had nothing thicker than a pair of ordinary walking shoes. I had also heard that the river was just beginning to freeze, and that it was unlikely anybody would be attempting the crossing. But I asked one of the station staff for advice. "The river looks pretty angry and there's a wind that's enough to freeze your marrow," he said. "But try at the post office. There may be a couple of Indians taking a canoe across."

As he suggested, there were two Indians at the post office, and who should they be but Andy Fairies and his canoe hand! "Better you stay here," Andy said seriously, when I explained I was looking for a lift.

"That would mean I'd have to wait for the ice to be hard enough to cross over, and that won't be for days. No, Andy, I'm coming across with you tonight."

The crossing was everything they had said about it. On the banks and out towards the black, rushing midsteam, ice was beginning to form—brittle, biscuit-thick ice, that gave under our feet as we launched the canoe. From the Hudson Bay there came a howling, needle-fingered gale that pierced the light coat I was wearing as if it were muslin, and scratched my face and legs with the paddle-drip it kept flicking off the paddles each time they were lifted.

Almost Upset The Canoe

Midstream, Andy tried to get the motor started and nearly upset us, tugging away at the starter cord. After jerking at the cord for about ten minutes while we lost ground in the current, he was about to give it up and return to his paddle when the motor suddenly spluttered into a roar and we were scudding upstream again. We couldn't go straight across to Moose Factory as a wide stretch of river to the lee of neighbouring Charles Island had frozen hard. So we crunched straight for the east bank of the island until the canoe stuck fast. Then Andy, in thigh-rubbers, stepped overboard, lifted me up in his arms and waded ashore.

They beached the canoe, and we trudged up the bush trail, lugging the outboard motor, paddles, mail bag and my luggage over to another canoe waiting on the other side of the island. We launched the canoe and set off again. The wind had now increased and my light clothes gave little protection. With my shoes and stockings sodden, my feet no longer seemed to exist, sensation ending somewhere near the knees. And when I was lifted again from my huddled position in the canoe I could barely straighten myself up to set foot on Moose Factory.

We had not arrived at the school landing, the approaches to that being frozen, but at the bush trail, where they had left a tractor with a snow plough fitted in front. The boys loaded the gear and then Andy turned to me. "I take you home first. Where you want to go?"

"Ruby's house. She's expecting me."

"How can you stay with Ruby? Ruby stay with father, mother, sister, brother. All family sleep in two beds. I see Ruby this evening——"

"Didn't she say she was expecting me?"

"She say nothing."

***NEXT WEEK:** I live among the Swampy Cree tribe. Sinclair proposes—and we elope*

Continuing the novel of the

FESTIVAL AT FARBRIDGE

THEY CAME TOGETHER on a blustery March day in the crowded Old Oak Nook Café in the market square of Farbridge, a small Midlands town. . . .

Laura Casey was a typist who had lost her job with Bulfoss and Sons, local estate agents. Theodore Jenks, a young man of means, home from Indonesia, was seeing his paternal country for the first time.

Theodore had been visiting a curious modern factory in a manor house at nearby Brant-in-the-Hollow. When he entered the café, he was immediately attracted to Laura, sitting alone at her table. He told her so, courteously but plainly. "You are very beautiful,'' he said simply.

The conversation, unfortunately, had no time to go further, for another man joined the table. He was an oldish fellow, clean-shaven, florid, with a lot of white hair, a piratical nose and tiny, bright eyes. "My name's Tribe—Commodore Tribe,'' he told them.

PART 3

Commodore Tribe

NOT very long before his first meeting with Laura Casey and Theodore Jenks, Commodore Tribe had been sitting at the far end of the upper floor of a large converted barn, which was in fact the editorial and general office of that monthly publication, *M.F.A.*—Mostly Foreign Affairs. The room was furnished and decorated in a rough-and-ready fashion, with files and books, mostly review copies, round the walls. A small oil stove was giving out more smell than warmth. The roof was leaking in two or three places.

Altogether it was a cheerless place in which to pass a wet March afternoon; but Commodore Tribe was comfortably drifting away from it. With an unfinished paragraph on the desk in front of him, he was slumped back in his chair, dozing. It was the dead middle of the afternoon; he had lunched heartily at The Bell and then smoked a pipe or two; and now he had quietly taken leave of this uninspired and profitless hour.

He was restored, though slowly, to full consciousness by the sound of an unusually unpleasant grating voice coming from the next room. "Miss Church,'' he called sleepily, "send that fellow away. Don't listen to him. Take no excuses. Send him away.''

But the next moment the caller was inside the room, fuming and glaring not two yards away. Commodore Tribe sat up and regarded him with frank distaste. He was a small, elderly man, with a long, waxy nose and a clipped grey beard and moustache; a scraggy, mean fellow.

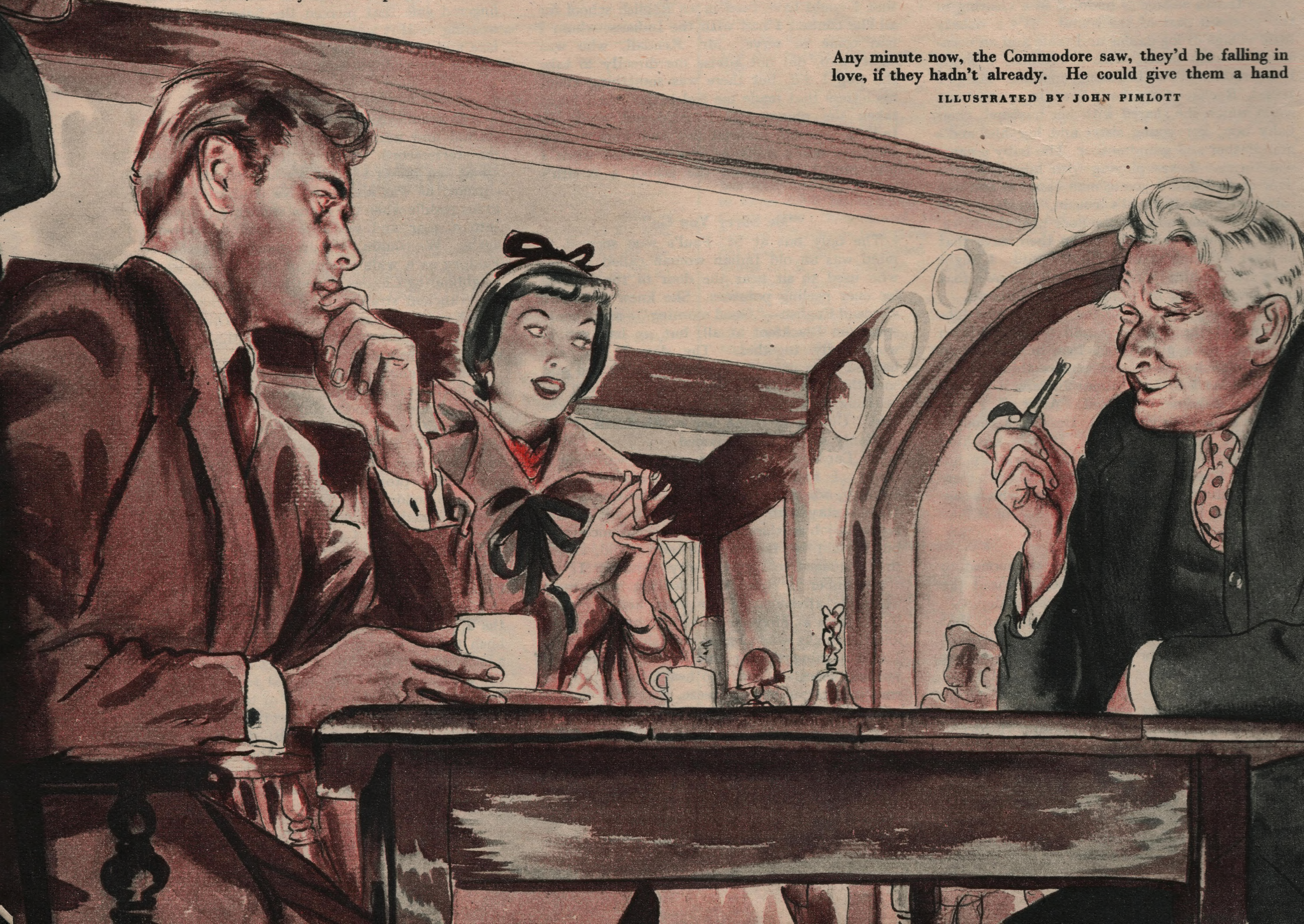
"Go away, sir,'' said Commodore Tribe. "If you want to see us, choose some other time.''

"You can't talk to me like that,'' the newcomer shouted. "Who are you?''

Lifting his bulk still higher in the chair, the Commodore saw that little Miss Church, the secretary, was making alarmed motions at him through the doorway. But this meant little or nothing because poor Miss Church existed in a perpetual state of alarm, living in this world like a rabbit in a kennel of hounds.

"I said—who are you?''

"And I heard you,'' said the Commodore, frowning at him. "But for that matter—and it's really more to the point—who the devil are *you*? As you can see—or would see if you only



Any minute now, the Commodore saw, they'd be falling in love, if they hadn't already. He could give them a hand

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN PIMLOTT

year by J. B. PRIESTLEY

stopped jigging about and blinking and blowing—I work here. Whereas you've just come charging in, uninvited, disturbing us, making a nuisance of yourself——"

"My name's Crandry—and I happen to be the proprietor of this publication." Clearly he thought the Commodore would be overwhelmed, following Miss Church's example. In fact, he waited for some sign of abasement. He was disappointed.

"Ah, Mr. Crandry—allow me to introduce myself—Tribe—Commodore Horace Tribe——"

"Commodore?" Mr. Crandry sounded as if he could not believe his ears. "Commodore? What d'you mean—Commodore?" He sat on the edge of the only other chair, and glared. He had eyes like scratched marbles, and his green tie looked as if it had been dyed in some metallic poison that was already beginning to turn his nose into dead wax.

The Commodore closed his eyes and assumed an air of immense patience, as though he were a lama a hundred years old. "If you must know—after serving for some years in the Royal Navy, I—er—was attached, chiefly in an advisory capacity, to the navy of one of the South American republics and had the honorary rank of commodore." He opened his eyes. "By the way, you haven't any tobacco on you—or a cigar—have you? I'm clean out."

"Don't smoke. Never have done. Let's come to the point. What are you doing here?"

The Commodore stared at him reproachfully. "Don't you know? I'm here as assistant editor and special adviser to our friend, Thoken, who, as you probably know, is away at present."

"No, didn't know," Mr. Crandry snapped. "Been abroad myself. Business in South Africa. Only just got back. Where is Thoken?"

"He's in France. Or Italy," said the Commodore vaguely. "Keeping in touch with the situation, you know."

"What situation?"

"Why, the situation in France or Italy, as the case may be. Must keep in touch, Mr. Crandry. Offered to go myself, but Thoken insisted upon going—and don't blame him with the damnable weather we have here. Roof leaks, too. You're attending to these things, I imagine. Anyhow, Thoken went off, and that left me here in charge. As you see."

"Don't know anything about you. Should have been told. Can't see why you should have been taken on. All extra expense. What salary are you getting?"

"Nominal—purely nominal," said the Commodore, shaking his white locks. "You'll hardly believe it. Twelve pounds a week."

"I don't call that nominal. What are you doing for that?"

The Commodore stared at him and then raised his formidable eyebrows. "My dear sir, you sound as if you were catechizing an office boy. At the moment I'm completing the editorial notes for the next issue." He waved a hand at the desk but then realized that this had been a mistake, for Crandry, before he could be stopped, made a dive for the writing pad there.

"*Early last month,*" Crandry read out slowly, "*it was decided at an emergency meeting at the Kremlin to double the number of long-range submarines under construction in the Soviet yards. We are informed that this decision*——" He stared over the writing pad. "Well, what about this decision?"

"What do *you* think?" the Commodore inquired smoothly. "Let's have *your* ideas, Mr. Crandry." His manner suggested they were a pair of easy conspirators.

CRANDRY flung down the pad, jumped up and looked as if he were about to do a step-dance on it. In his fury his voice became a harsh scream. "What do *I* think? Never heard such confounded impudence! And this emergency meeting at the Kremlin—how the blazes do *you* know what happened in the Kremlin?"

"Guesswork, my dear sir. Pure guesswork."

"But I'm not going to waste good money printing and circulating your guesswork. You must be out of your mind, man. We want facts—facts—facts." And he thumped the desk.

The Commodore ignored him. "Miss Church," he called, "please nip across to the grocer for some tobacco. It'll be muck, but better than nothing. If I'm to have all this noise and fuss in here, I must smoke." He then looked at Mr. Crandry, who seemed to be stunned by these tactics, and asked: "And where do we get these facts from?"

"Where—where—well, that's your job—and Thoken's."

"You're being unreasonable," said the Commodore easily. "Come now, you must see that. *M.F.A.* has been giving its readers these secret items from the Kremlin—and, of course, other places—ever since it started. Look at the files—they're just behind you."

"But we can't print guesswork. Thoken assured me he had sources of information——"

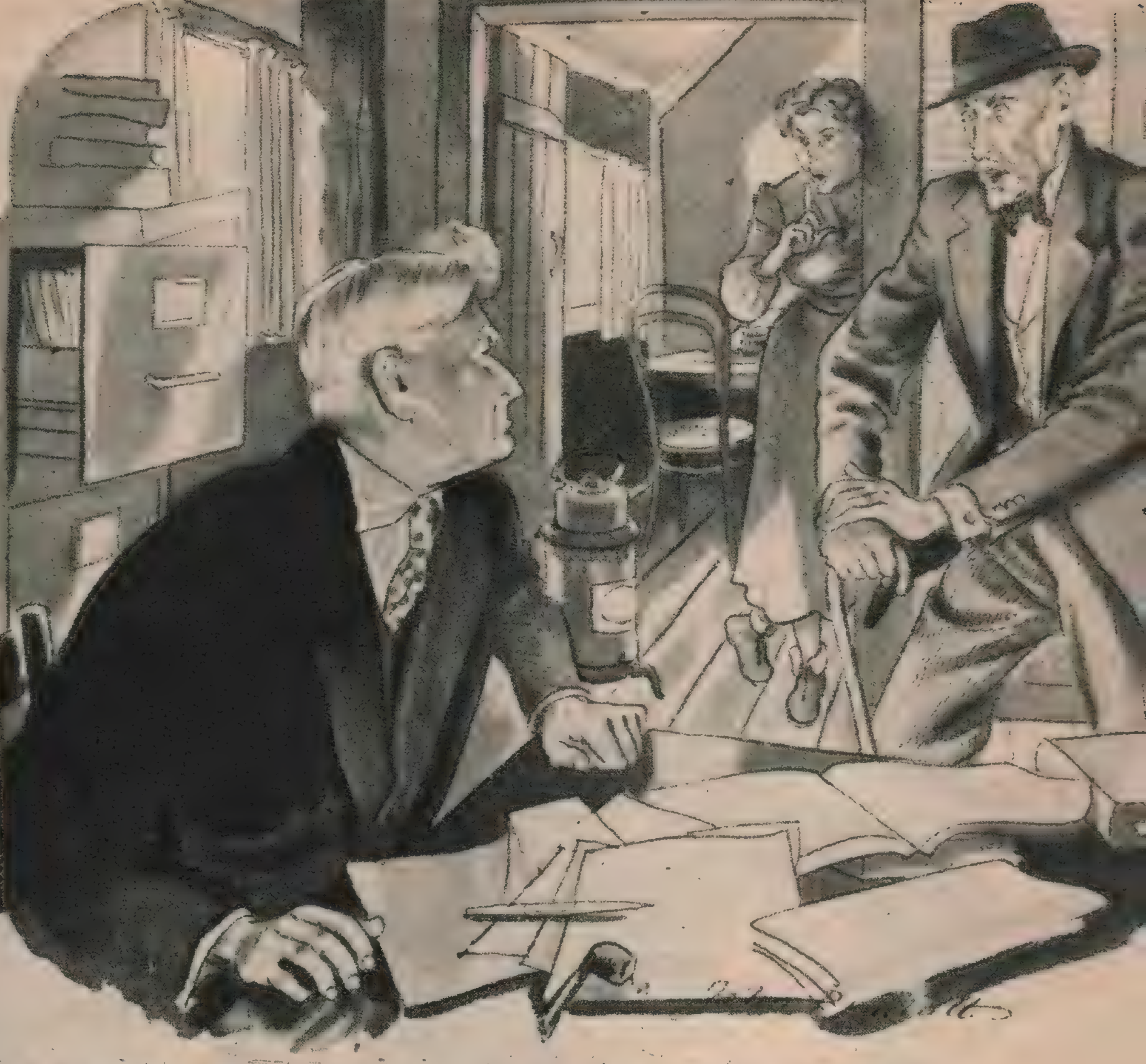
Smiling, the Commodore raised a large hand and pushed it out towards Crandry's waxy nose, which was now turning a very unpleasant pink. "My dear Crandry——"

"I'm not your dear Crandry."

"You're not," and now the Commodore showed some sign of irritation, "and I wish to God you'd stop jiggling. The point is—Thoken's guessing, I'm guessing, and if you were bringing out this monthly you'd have to be guessing, too. Come, come, use your common sense. I doubt if the combined Intelligence services of Britain, the United States and Western Europe can penetrate into the Kremlin. So how do you expect me to do it, on twelve pounds a week, sitting here in a damned wet barn in the South Midlands? What do you think I have—second-sight?"

"But our readers——"

"Our readers, whoever they are, like to feel they're being taken behind the scenes, listening to hidden microphones in Moscow, wearing false beards in Teheran, peering at messages in invisible ink in the back rooms of Stamboul night clubs. For that they're willing to pay half a crown a month, and if you happen to have that sort of mind, it's probably a bargain."



"Go away, sir," said the Commodore. He could not imagine why Miss Church was shooshing him

"I'll bargain you—you—you charlatan," Crandry screeched. "I don't care what terms you arranged with Thoken, I'm the proprietor—and here and now you're discharged."

"You mean that?" And the Commodore stared at him in some surprise. "Careful now. You're obviously a livery, peppery sort of fellow—that nose——"

"I tell you—you're discharged."

"And remember you're due to go to press next Tuesday. Do you propose to edit the thing yourself, Crandry?"

"No, I don't," he snapped. "It's no longer any business of yours, but you might as well know that I'm also the proprietor of the *South Midland Gazette* and the *Weekly Record and Advertiser,* and until I get Thoken back, one of their fellows can take charge of this publication."

The Commodore rose, lofty, contemptuous. "Their idea of foreign affairs is a dispute in the cattle market at Moreton-on-the-Marsh. So you own those two miserable papers, eh, Crandry? In that case, accept my resignation." He turned to greet Miss Church. "Thank you very much, my dear."

"I got an ounce of Newmown Hay Mixture and an ounce of Hedger Flake," she announced breathlessly.

"They're both muck. But better than nothing. I think you heard me tell Mr. Crandry that he must accept my resignation, eh?"

"Yes, Commodore Tribe," she replied, looking at him mournfully.

"Resignation? I told you you were discharged." Crandry was bending over the desk, making out a cheque. "And out you go."

GOING across to the shelves, the Commodore began removing books from them with admirable speed and dexterity.

Crandry looked up. "What are you doing with those books?"

"These books, which I've reviewed," replied the Commodore, with dignity, "are my property."

"Nothing of the kind. They stay in this office."

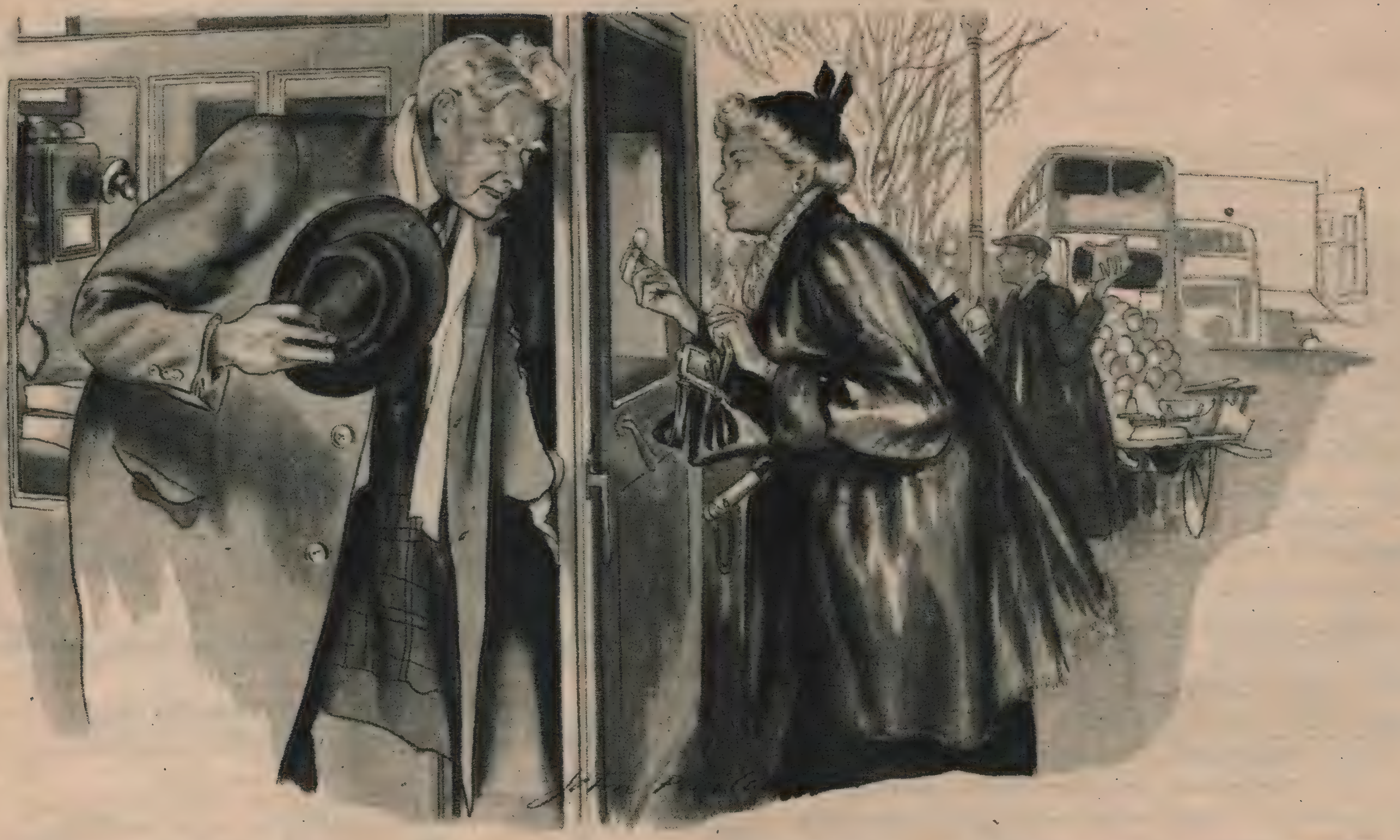
"Miss Church, is it or is it not the custom for reviewers to keep the books they've reviewed? Speak up, my dear, so that Mr. Crandry can hear you."

"Well, yes—that's right," Miss Church stammered. "I mean, reviewers usually keep the books."

"It's not worth arguing about," said Crandry. "And here's your cheque—for two weeks' salary—and you can clear out at once."

The Commodore examined the cheque. "This is simply for twenty-four pounds. What about expenses?"

"You'll get no expenses out of me," shouted



He was still shocked by the news, and could not, at first, understand what the woman wanted

Crandry, doing a little jig of rage. "And if there's any more argument, I'll cancel that cheque, and defy you to sue me." He turned away, making for the door.

"You seem to me a singularly unpleasant little man," said the Commodore severely. "I was right to resign. We could never work together happily."

The parcel of books was heavy and so was Commodore Tribe's old green ulster. It was not a warm afternoon but it began to feel like one to him, making a stately progress down Tredberrow's straggling main street on his way back to the hotel. When he reached a trim little Georgian house and heard a tapping on one of its windows, he was glad to halt. It was Mrs. Watson beckoning him in; and in he went.

Mrs. Watson was very old, a widow who shared the house with a grim, elderly maid called Birkett. She was the most intelligent person in Tredberrow, and probably for miles around. She looked a small, clean witch, was for ever exchanging spectacles, sometimes wearing two pairs at a time, knew everybody and everything belonging to the whole neighbourhood, and, with the doubtful exception of Lucy York at The Bell, she was the only real friend the Commodore had made in Tredberrow.

Seating himself at the other side of the hearth in a chair much too small for him, the Commodore told her what had happened between himself and Crandry that afternoon. "So I insisted upon taking these books away," he concluded, "in the hope of selling 'em to somebody. May make a few pounds. And I can do with a few pounds." He was always frank with Mrs. Watson, having realized from the first that here was somebody who could not be fooled.

"You're not to try to sell them to the poor vicar," she said sharply. "I know you probably could, but you're not to. He's got nothing but his wretched stipend—and all those great, maddening daughters—and though you may have nothing but your wits—and I know you live on them—they're a better financial asset than his stipend."

"I doubt it," he said gloomily.

"Come, come, this isn't like you. And surely you must have known from the first that you wouldn't last long with that absurd review. Mr. Thoken's different—he's half a fool—and you're not. Not that I think you haven't been foolish."

He gave her a fat, slow, rueful grin, which she recognized with a spectral little grin of her own, but then she returned to her brisk severity, wagging a tiny swollen finger at him.

"You're carrying your wits to the wrong market. Nowadays the place for an adventurer like you, with nothing to offer but a touch of charm and plenty of impudence, is in public affairs. That's where the easy money, the fat, is in these days, and not where you're trying to find it, among the Crandrys, who count every penny. Two out of three of my young relatives, who are mostly idiots, are earning a living at the public expense and out of the taxes I pay, as I keep reminding them. And if they can do it, so could you, my friend. Now then, what do you say to that?"

"The answer's quite simple," said the Commodore, with a heavy sigh. "I ought to have come back sooner. Now I'm too old. There's the rub. Most of your young relatives may be in the trough, but they're young. I'm not. I may seem young to you, but to the average appointments committee I look a hundred—and a damned dubious raffish hundred at that. No doubt I could talk 'em out of worrying about that side of it, but not out of looking at these white hairs."

She nodded briskly. "You have a point there, I'll admit. But with all this Festival of Britain nonsense, there ought to be something, if it's not too late. What are your immediate plans?"

"I haven't any," he confessed, "though I've not had much time to think yet, having been turfed out of that job only half an hour ago. The truth is, I haven't been bothering—just drifting along here——"

"I know. And being given a lot of fat meals and free drinks by Mrs. York at The Bell. I know what you've been up to there. And that's one reason why I called you in. My maid, Birkett," she continued, lowering her voice, "is very friendly with the sister of Mrs. York's husband, Frank York. I gather that Frank York may be coming back any day now, and I imagine that he hasn't told his wife who, whatever she may have told you, is terrified of him. Now do you see?"

The Commodore gave her a slow nod, and pushed out his lower lip.

"So I thought I'd better warn you. Could you go up to town on Tuesday, if necessary? Very well, I'll write to Daubenny Stevens, who is the only son of my youngest sister, who married a man in the Home Office, to suggest he should give you lunch. He's in that Ministry of Propaganda or Information or whatever it's called. I shall ask him to reply at once. Telephone me on Monday morning."

"I will—and many thanks."

"You're a rascal, you know," she continued, "and twenty years ago I would have strongly disapproved of you. Now I don't care, and even wish you well."

He took the swollen claw, with its deeply embedded gems, she held out. "I was thinking, my dear Mrs. Watson, that you're the only real friend I've made here, and that it's you—and only you—I shall miss when I go."

The sharp old glance softened for a moment. Then she laughed. "There's enough female left in me, you rogue, to respond a little to that whisky-sodden, hoarse voice of yours, my friend. That's how you do it, I suppose. Why we women are so susceptible to voices, I've never understood. By the way, my nephew, Daubenny, unless he's radically changed just lately, is rather a conceited prig. But then, so many of them are now. Telephone me on Monday."

Late in the evening, after The Bell had been closed to the local public, the Commodore was enjoying a last whisky in Mrs. York's little sitting-room. She was looking at him, as she frequently did, with wonder and affection mistily mingled in her large hazel eyes, which, in spite of her forty-odd years, her semi-sophisticated patter, her smart gowns, were those of a plump, daft country lass. He was wondering whether to tell her that her husband might return any day now—or any night—and was rapidly reviewing the arguments for and against this move. After being asked twice what he was thinking about, he decided against telling her, chiefly because she might then want him to clear out at once and that would be very inconvenient. Then he remembered the books.

"My dear Lucy, I was thinking about all those books I brought from the *M.F.A.* office. They're worth at least ten pounds, and I could do with ten pounds. Now, is there anybody coming here who has the money and is fool enough to buy those books? You know your customers. Can you think of anybody?"

"Let's see—tomorrow's Saturday, isn't it? Well now, I've a dinner for four ordered—by that young Geoffrey Middleham, up at Low Hall. I believe that him and Admiral Broadwater are playing a golf match with two gentlemen from Farbridge, and I know he told Walter he wanted a very special dinner. I'm getting them some very nice hors-d'œuvres and a chicken to follow and——"

"Yes, yes, a very special dinner. But you think he's a likely customer? Plenty of money? Not much sense?"

"You could try him, couldn't you, dear? And he'll probably bring them in early, to have some cocktails. He came in for quite a lot of money, and doesn't mind spending it, specially when he's had a few drinks—you know the sort."

"I know them well," said the Commodore, finishing his whisky, "but, unfortunately, in rapidly decreasing numbers. Mr. Geoffrey Middleham, eh? Thank you, my dear Lucy."

Almost monopolizing the little cocktail bar and the services of the blonde barmaid, early on Saturday evening, were four men in golfing tweeds. They had the solidly complacent look of well-to-do Englishmen who had taken exercise and were now taking alcohol. Between them they had created at once the atmosphere of a decent club with a fairly stiff entrance fee and a secretary who could wear a regimental tie. They were behaving like sound clubmen, straddling their legs, talking in loud, uninflected voices, guffawing and roaring at very small jokes or no jokes at all; being so manly that they hardly seemed human. And to them, like an enormous smiling pike after minnows, came Commodore Tribe.

He remembered now having already met Mr. Geoffrey Middleham, who was a sandy, bulbous young man, as though a fox had been crossed with a frog. "A-ah!" he cried, striking the right note immediately. "Middleham, eh?"

"What? Oh, yes—Commodore Tribe, eh?"

"It is. And how's it going?"

"Pretty good. Have a drink. Know Admiral Broadwater, do you?"

"Run across you somewhere, I think," said

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I found a new voice

by JAMES RYAN

It was the most exciting news I had ever heard. They hoped to cure my dumbness by teaching me an alternative way of speaking

James Ryan sits out with his wife (right). He can now enjoy a chat between the dances

I SHALL NEVER FORGET THAT bleak January day in 1940. We were extra busy in the costing and accounts department, for the younger men were being called up every day. The phone didn't stop ringing. . . . For the hundredth time that day I picked it up.

"Hallo, is that you, Jim?" came a voice. "Manchester office here. A tricky point you can help us with, old man." I mouthed the words in answer. But no sound came. "Damn it, we've been cut off," said Manchester. I heard him replace his receiver.

I sat stunned—ostensibly working out some figures. Then I tried thinking. Silly to worry. Plenty of people lose their voices, temporarily, through overstrain—and after all, I was more susceptible than most. Since a bullet had lodged in my windpipe at Vimy in 1917 I'd been wearing a silver tube in place of the bit they had to take out. That old wound had often given trouble. How many operations had I had? I busied myself counting. Thirty-two in all. There you are, then, I said to myself—just Nature saying take it easy. . . .

Then I saw the gloomy side. For the past six months I had been losing a terrific amount of weight; my voice had been getting noticeably more hoarse; often it had hurt to speak. . . . The phone rang again. Hastily I beckoned the office boy and scribbled: "Lost voice. Tell them I'll ring first thing tomorrow."

Back in my Surrey home that night I tried to make light of it, but I could see my wife was worried, and my five-year-old son was plainly puzzled. "Probably this awful weather," I scribbled. "Be better after a night's sleep." I smiled at her—and she tried to smile back.

But I wasn't better after a night's sleep. My voice had gone completely. For six weeks I tried to carry on at work. By late February I was in pain most of the time. I had to go on sick leave. I had reported to my doctor the month before, and he had told me he would get me into hospital as soon as possible. By April they had found a bed for me.

"The house surgeon wants to see you, Number Three!" I was up, though my neck was still swathed in bandages. Four weeks before, they had done a preliminary investigation operation. Now I should hear what was wrong. I wasn't particularly worried as the nurse led me along to the ante-room. After thirty-two operations I had grown used to the atmosphere of hospitals and felt almost "bomb happy." Then I saw the expression on the house surgeon's face—and I knew I was in for a shock. Calmly, he explained the position.

There was a growth on the larynx, caused by a leakage from my old war wound. Left as it was, he reckoned I had six months to a year to live, during which time I should, of course, be quite dumb. There was one hope, but it was a risk—the complete removal of the larynx. This laryngectomy operation was not always successful, he said. In fact, he admitted that I had only a fifty-fifty chance of recovery. Was I prepared to take the risk? I didn't wait to think it over, but agreed on the spot. I would be transferred to another hospital for the operation the following week—there was no reason why I should not go home for the weekend.

Hid Truth From My Wife

My wife and son were waiting to greet me. "Just another op.," I wrote. "Thirty-third time lucky." I couldn't bear to tell her the truth. "Will you be able to speak again?" she asked. "They think so," I scribbled. Frankly, I thought I hadn't a hope.

Once in hospital again, my old bomb-happy mood began to come back. In fact, I had no time to brood before my turn came. When I woke up I felt nothing unusual. My first visitor the same evening was the house surgeon, who told me I was doing fine. I thought it strange that from then onwards my wife was allowed to visit me every day. I heard later that the house surgeon had told her (not me) that they did not expect me to pull through. For eight weeks I was on the danger list, but I was able to get up a little after three months, and within four months I was out.

The house surgeon did stress, though, that I had proved a tougher case than most, because of my war wound. In normal cases, he said, the patient was able to go home within three or four weeks. In my case, too, plastic operations had to be done, in gradual stages, to close up the wound. In fact, it was not until November, 1944—four years later—that the final plastic operation was done and the bandages came off.

By the end of December, 1940, I decided to go back to work. I was still quite dumb, and had to write everything down. My employers were kindness itself and made things as easy as possible for me. But I was glad when, three months later, the hospital recalled me for another plastic operation. Without my voice, work had become more of a strain than I liked to admit. Would I ever speak again? It was a question which had been haunting me throughout the year. And once back in hospital there came the first ray of hope.

I had barely recovered from the operation before Sister told me one morning: "Be ready at three o'clock to see the speech therapist." I remember getting quite excited. I don't quite know what I expected, but when I heard how she

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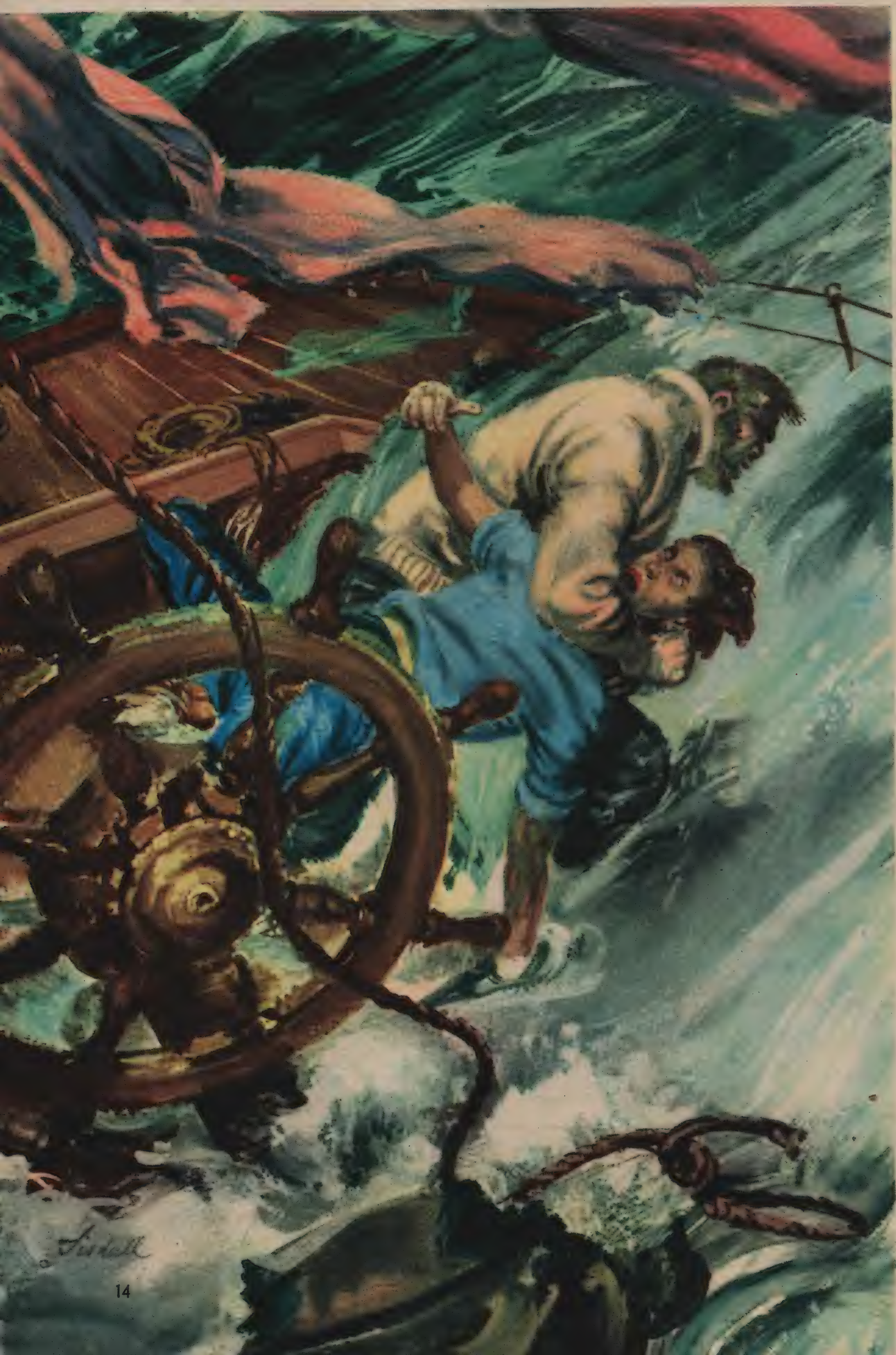
DEAD LETTER ROCK

by BARRY PEROWNE

ILLUSTRATED BY TISDALL

The boy was young, ingratiating, and doomed. With food for only one, Matt knew he had to be rid of him—quickly



The boy was screaming. "No kill, *Capitán*, No kill." Bellowing, Matt gripped him more tightly

It was not long after daybreak; the weather was fine and sparkling. The yacht, *Sheba*, making eight knots with the wind on the starboard quarter, lifted and dipped on a slight swell.

The wheel was lashed, for Matthew Cass was sailing lonehanded. His last port of call, Port Elizabeth in South Africa, lay nearly 800 miles astern; his destination, Perth in Western Australia, was still thousands of miles away. He had reached much farther to the south than he liked, and the dawn wind held an icy hint of the Southern Ocean.

Matt was below, opening a tin of beans for breakfast, when a strange thing happened. He thought he heard footfalls on deck.

Matt had been too long alone. He had sailed the *Sheba* from Evenhoe in the Essex marshes to Capetown and Port Elizabeth, a voyage of many months of hardship and solitude. Sometimes he heard voices talking, heard them quite plainly, though all around him was only sea and sky. He listened for them as habitually and attentively now—even in his sleep—as he listened to the wind and the sea and the sails. Footfalls were something new.

He felt a little cold current along his spine as he cocked his head, listening. He was a big, burly man in a heavy, white sweater, old grey flannels and cracked canvas shoes. He had a round, brick-red face, a curly yellow beard, and hair that clustered, also yellow and curly, round a shiny, brown, bald spot. His brow bulged over small, vague, blue eyes, and there were tiny inflamed veins in his blunt nose.

Matt was an inarticulate, harmless, bumbling man who had lived much in remote places. He had been a lumberjack in British Columbia, cook on a ranch in Wyoming, telegraphist at a water-tank station in the Argentine pampas. His family once had had money, and Matt, a rolling stone, was a born amateur. He rarely had earned much more than his keep and his rum. He had sailed many times in ocean-racing yachts; skippers making up crews for the Fastnet and Bermuda races would find a place for him—"old Matt Cass always pulls his weight." He had sailed in research vessels, whalers, and—during the wars—in the Merchant Navy.

Loneliness never had held any terrors for him in the past. But this voyage had gone on too long—this interminable voyage to Australia, to seek Margaret Rhodes, the one woman he felt he had ever really known. It may have been his need of her, or that he was getting on a bit—he was nearly sixty—but he knew in his heart this voyage was the last he was likely to make.

Now, on the last leg, living in a dream, his money all finished and, with luck, just enough stores to last him out till Perth, he had started hearing footfalls about the deck.

There was nothing ahead, for another three or four days, but the lonely Barrel Island, to remind him of his youth—and of how much too far to the south he had reached.

Barrel Island. It took him back thirty years and more; he had dreamed about it last night. He had set foot once on that deserted rock when on a voyage out of Durban in a whaler. Only whaling-ships, keeping up a tradition of bygone days, ever called there. If bound for the Southern Ocean whaling grounds, they sent a boat ashore to put last letters for home in the famous tarred barrel on the cliff; if homeward bound, they collected letters left by outward-bounders for posting in Durban. "Dead Letter Rock," the whalers called it.

Now, shaking his head, he jabbed the opener hard into the tin of beans, began

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A Monday morning *Woman's Hour* huddle, when future programmes are thrashed out. Janet Quigley is at the top of the table. The others, clockwise, are: Marguerite Scott, Madge Hart, Miss Boger (editor's secretary), Joanna Scott-Moncrieff, Mary Hill, Antony Derville, Iza Benzie and Honor Wyatt

The housewife behind Woman's Hour

by *POWELL SMILY*

Janet Quigley has two golden rules for her show. She avoids "preaching," and she has at least one man in every programme

EACH DAY, except Saturday and Sunday, at 2 p.m., some four million British women tune in *Woman's Hour*, the Light Programme's sixty-minute show for housewives. Until she was laid low by an attack of the 'flu last winter, however, Janet Quigley was never able to include herself among the listening audience. "I was always too busy with office work," she says, with an Irish smile.

There are, of course, thousands of woman whose work prevents them from hearing daytime radio programmes, but Miss Quigley's case is somewhat different from the average. She happens to be the editor of *Woman's Hour*, and most editors like to know what kind of final product they have been responsible for turning out.

Not so Janet Quigley. "I have the utmost faith in my producers," she explains, "so why shouldn't I leave the studio end of things to them? Besides, I'm generally much too busy planning the programme for five weeks ahead. Look at this." She waved a hand at the top of her desk, which was piled high with files, memoranda and correspondence. In fact, Miss Quigley, who is on the smallish side, was barely visible behind one of the piles.

"It's been like this since I took over the editorship last June, and I don't really think I'll ever get the desk completely clear. But," Janet adds, "that's the way I like it."

Miss Quigley's policy of interfering as little as possible with her producers provides an interesting contrast with the early days of *Woman's Hour*. The programme was first heard on October 7, 1946; and almost immediately a sort of guerrilla war began. There existed at that time two chains of command in the Talks Department; neither faction was too inclined to agree with the other on any subject. In addition, there was a considerable body of opinion within the B.B.C. which thought that *Woman's Hour* never should have been aired at all.

"A whole *hour* for women?" these militant males protested. "And in the middle of the afternoon? Why, the poor dears will be much too busy standing in queues to listen. Perhaps ten or fifteen minutes early in the morning, but certainly not an *hour*, old boy."

But Norman Collins, then head of the Light Programme, was in favour of trying the idea out, and his influence was great enough to get the show on the air. Yet there was no noticeable reaction from the housewives for whom the broadcast was designed. In fact, the initial programmes went over with a dull thud. No one wrote any letters, either praising or blaming, which is always an ominous sign. One of the basic tenets of show business is that it is much better to be hated than to be ignored. But that is just what the women of Britain did for the better part of six months. They ignored *Woman's Hour*.

"I don't blame them a bit," admits one member of the Talks Department who was involved in the post-natal illnesses of the programme. "It certainly was a mess."

What had happened was that *Woman's Hour* became a sort of dumping ground for scripts and speakers who were not suitable for other B.B.C. programmes. If someone came up with an interesting idea (or even an uninteresting one) which did not fit in anywhere else, the chances were that the decision would be: "Oh, we can probably bung it into *Woman's Hour* some time."

The result of that sort of thing was epitomized, according to a story told in Broadcasting House, by a mild-mannered little man who wandered into the *Woman's Hour* studio one day just before the broadcast began. "I'm giving a talk on cement mixing," he announced. "The name is Jones." In due course, the announcer gravely announced that Mr. Jones would give the inside story of cement mixing, and Mr. Jones did so. It was not until they found themselves with one speaker too many that the programme's staff realized that he had performed in the wrong show.

That has all been changed. Each Monday morning, Janet Quigley goes into a huddle with her producers and plans the radio fare to be offered to *Woman's Hour* listeners five weeks hence. At the conferences, the producers put forward ideas and suggestions which they have conceived themselves, or which have been sent in by writers and speakers.

The Dishes That Men Enjoy

For example, Honor Wyatt, the programme's cooking expert, said at one editorial get-together: "Why don't we do something on the kind of dishes that men enjoy? Most men think they're good cooks; let's give them a chance to prove it."

So a series known as "Man in the Kitchen" was included once a week in *Woman's Hour*. It took the form of selected men describing how they would prepare a meal if they were given the chance, and it proved quite popular with the women. But in at least one instance, the thing backfired. "When I got home," disclosed one of the men who appeared in the series, "my wife said: 'I didn't know you were a cook. This is wonderful. From now on, you can get the dinner twice a week.'"

"Man in the Kitchen" illustrates a cardinal precept of *Woman's Hour,* which is to have at least one male voice on every programme. "It keeps the show from getting monotonous," Janet Quigley explains. "A solid hour of nothing but women talking is apt to be too much, even for other women."

The men who speak on the programme represent a variety of trades and professions. Jon Farrell, who has been in *Male Animal, Detective Story* and other London plays, once gave a whimsical little talk on his experiences with a canary which suddenly presented him with four baby canaries. After his talk, Farrell received a rather touching letter from a Midlands listener who wanted his advice on how to persuade love-birds to love. "I explained," says Jon, "that I wasn't an expert, but merely a victim of ornithological circumstances, like herself."

"Our listeners never become cross with the artists," says Janet Quigley. "We get 500 letters a week, on the average, and some of them are quite critical. But they always criticize the programme; never the speaker."

An old stand-by of *Woman's Hour* is Marian Cutler, whose "Can I Help You?" talks have been a popular part of the programme for some time. Quite naturally, Miss Cutler receives a large weekly mail from housewives with problems. One of the most pressing problems she encountered was that of an anonymous woman who wrote in to ask: "How can I murder my old man without getting caught?"

Over a period of a year, practically every producer in the B.B.C. Talks Department contributes one or more "spots" to *Woman's Hour;* but there are three members of the Talks staff who are more or less permanently seconded to Janet Quigley. In addition to Honor Wyatt, there is Antony Derville, who is the programme's fashion expert, and Marguerite Scott, who handles the miscellaneous speakers.

There are three stages in preparing a talk for the programme. The first is deciding upon the subject matter and the speaker; that is generally done at the Monday morning conferences. If it is a regular talk—such as one of the immensely popular "Current Affairs" series—an expert in that particular field will be invited to speak.

Sometimes, however, a good idea comes unsolicited from a freelance. In that case, it is necessary for him or her to write the script, re-write it if necessary, and then go along to Broadcasting House on the morning of the chosen day, for rehearsal. Between rehearsal and actual broadcast there is a time lapse of a couple of hours, during which the speakers have lunch.

Helping The Mothers

In addition to the Monday morning meetings, Janet Quigley calls her producers together quarterly for a strategy session. That is, they map out the broad outlines of the programme for the following three months. For instance, this quarter the show is featuring a "Child Guidance Clinic," under the direction of Miss Iza Benzie. The clinic gives helpful advice to mothers on that most difficult of all professions—raising children.

"But we must be careful not to sound as though we're trying to 'educate' them," Miss Benzie points out. "Nothing makes a housewife so annoyed as being preached at. We try to make the clinic *interesting* first, and instructive afterwards."

Another innovation this year is the giving of one complete *Woman's Hour* programme to each of the regions. Previously, there have been broadcasts from the regions on specific subjects, but never had an entire show been done from anywhere but London. "We feel that it will stimulate competition," Janet Quigley said before the first regional programme, which originated in Manchester. "But I hope they don't make the listeners like the regions better than they do London."

The Manchester broadcast very nearly achieved just that. Said one listener: "We get a little tired of hearing those elegant accents that all the announcers and interviewers, even the women, on the London B.B.C. seem to have. It's a nice change to hear a genuine Lancashire or Yorkshire voice."

Janet Quigley suspects that the success of the Manchester broadcast will do two things: it will stimulate the other regions to produce programmes equally as good, if not better, and it will force *Woman's Hour* to use more regional accents in future programmes.

Miss Quigley's attitude towards *Woman's Hour* is that it should and must make British housewives better informed, and therefore better citizens. She points out at every opportunity that the wives of this island form half the electorate, and that without an intelligent electorate you cannot have good government.

Further, there's the important matter of providing the listeners with real entertainment. "Very few wives," Janet Quigley declares, "really like housework. When they get married most of them leave jobs of one kind or another, and take on work for which only a few are naturally suited. Suppose that happened to men. Suppose that a lawyer or an architect were told: 'If you want to marry the woman you love, you'll have to give up your job and become an engine driver.' Most of them would emphatically refuse to make such a sacrifice. But women are doing it all the time. Therefore, an hour a day designed solely for their pleasure is no more than they deserve."

Married To Scientist

Miss Quigley knows the problem from both sides, for she is a housewife as well as an editor. Born in Belfast in May, 1902, she entered the B.B.C. in 1930, after taking an honours degree at Oxford. From then until 1936 she was in the Overseas Department; she transferred in that year to Talks, where she produced a programme called *Woman's Page,* on which the format of *Woman's Hour* has more or less been based. In 1945 she married Kevin Fitzgerald, a scientist, who has done some broadcasting himself. They went to live in Dublin, where Fitzgerald was transferred by his firm, and for the next five years Janet remained exclusively on the receiving end of broadcasting.

Then Evelyn Gibbs decided to retire as editor of *Woman's Hour,* and the B.B.C. felt that Miss Quigley would be the ideal successor. "You'll be sorry," said Janet's friends in Ireland, when she accepted the invitation. "It will drive you crazy inside a month."

It is true that Miss Quigley often looks harassed, but she still has her sanity. She believes very deeply in what she's doing, and feels her job has far greater compensations than the rather poor salary paid by the B.B.C. In spite of her small stature, she has a tremendous capacity for work; and her eyes seem always to be fixed on some distant objective.

"The programme," she says earnestly, "will never be so good that it can't be improved. Radio critics have said that *Woman's Hour* is already more smoothly produced than some B.B.C. programmes which are much more famous, but we all know there are still many ways of making it better." THE END

A *Woman's Hour* interview. **Joan Rhodes, strong woman, shows how to tear a telephone directory**

Sergeant Siddons, mountain rescuer

On the worst winter nights, Siddons and his men are called out to search for crashed planes or lost hikers. Sometimes it's a false alarm; more often it's tragedy

by DON EVERITT

With map and walkie-talkie microphone, Flight Sergeant Siddons pinpoints one of his patrols

A "corpse" strapped to a stretcher sledge. Siddons (right) says he brings few back alive

LATE ONE WINTER AFTERNOON in 1949, the Tannoy rustled into life over the R.A.F. Coastal Command station at Kinloss, near Inverness, and an urgent voice said: "Mountain rescue squad report for duty at once. I say again—mountain rescue squad report for duty at once." In various parts of the airfield about thirty young men, most of them overalled, dirty and tired, instantly dropped their tools and headed at the double towards a hut behind one of the hangars.

Inside the hut, meanwhile, Flight Sergeant Don Siddons, the n.c.o. in charge of the squad, was making repeated, rapid phone calls as he pored over one of the inch-to-the-mile maps which covered the walls of his office. From police stations, gamekeepers and farmers, he was trying to establish the last that had been seen or heard of a Fleet Air Arm Firefly training aircraft which had been reported two hours overdue at nearby Lossiemouth airfield. It was believed to have crashed in a snowstorm in the Lochnagar area, near the Balmoral royal estate.

The flight sergeant's task was far from easy. In the atrocious weather which had suddenly blown up over the Highlands, few people living along the aircraft's course had even heard it. Of those who had, several were hazy about times. Siddons thought the problem was solved when a police sergeant brought to the phone a woman who said she had actually seen the aircraft. Giving an approximate time and the plane's direction, she added: "I heard a dull thump about two or three minutes later." To Siddons this was vital information; he began to calculate the rough position of the crash. About ten minutes later the police sergeant rang through again. He said: "What that woman heard was not a plane crashing at all. Her old man was cutting wood in a shed and the cylinder-head gasket on his saw exploded."

Siddons next spoke to a gamekeeper who also said he had heard the crash. Then another problem arose. It was learned that a local quarry had been blasting during the day. While Siddons and his men were on their way, a policeman cycled nine miles to make certain that the noise believed to be the crash had not been a quarry explosion.

Search In Blinding Snow

The squad reached the position chosen for base camp just before seven thirty. The police and gamekeepers, who were there to meet them, disagreed with the flight sergeant over the position of the crash. They insisted it would be farther into the mountains than he suggested. As all of them knew the area intimately and one had actually heard the plane, he accepted their judgment. At eight o'clock, with the snow swirling with increasing ferocity down the darkening mountainsides, the squad split into search parties and moved off.

At 1 a.m. they returned to base for a breather. Ninety minutes later they went out again. By this time the wind and snow were approaching blizzard proportions and, with visibility almost nil, they could only keep shouting out, hoping that the airmen were still alive and would hear them. Shortly after dawn they went back to base for breakfast, but within half an hour they were out on the mountains again. Except for two one-hour breaks for lunch and tea, they stayed out searching in the blinding snow for more than twelve hours.

Daylight had improved visibility to ten yards, but—though it hardly seemed possible—the weather was worsening. At lunch the wind force was more than fifty miles an hour. The gamekeepers and policemen gathered at the base camp said that Siddons would be foolish to go out again. "Your chances of finding anything in this are a thousand to one," they said. Siddons laughed and said good-naturedly: "Okay then, we'll take that chance."

But at nine o'clock that night he had to admit temporary defeat. The snow was driving so hard and so thick that the rescuers' powerful torches could hardly pierce it to show them where to put their feet. Siddons spent a wakeful night, pondering over the position of the crash. At five o'clock he got up, roused some of his colleagues and said: "We're going to search where we originally planned—and to hell with the gamekeepers."

Misled By Crash Noise

Less than two hours later they had found the wrecked plane, lying near the top of the 3,125-foot Miekel Pap, and within a hundred yards of the spot Siddons had first marked on his map. Only 500 yards away the squad had stopped for a snack twenty-four hours earlier on their way to search the area suggested by the gamekeepers. "They had been misled by the noise of the crash," Siddons says. "It had been muffled by the clouds. Anyway, it was too late. Both airmen had been killed outright."

For his leading part in this search, the lithe, twenty-nine year old flight sergeant was shortly afterwards awarded the British Empire Medal. He is believed to be the only person to have received such an award for mountain rescue work in Britain.

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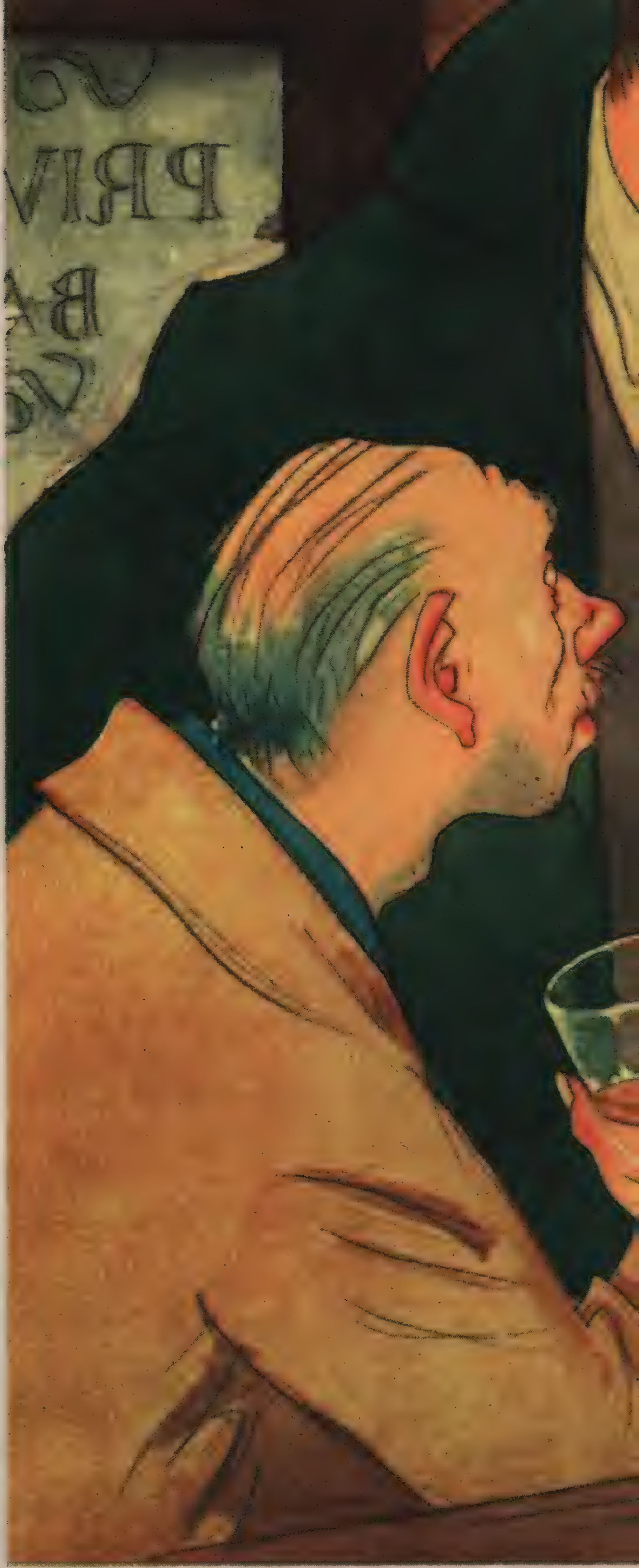
INSIDE INFORMATION

by DUDLEY BARKER

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD O. ROSE

If the dog won, they'd be cleaned out; if she lost, they'd win a fortune. Such a simple little problem . . .



Little Mr. Bunn was unhappily aware of the

THE DOGS WERE WANDERING curiously behind their wire fences, sniffing. Always sniffing, thought Billy Dagjatt, on his three-legged stool, in his white coat, with his cigarette drooping; as though there were ever anything new to sniff. Same old smells, grass, white paint on wood, wire netting.

And yet they went on sniffing, regular, methodical-like, hopeful, as though one day there might be a new smell, bit of meat perhaps, rat, biscuit crumbs. There never would be, not in these kennels. Wasting their time, but they kept at it, sniff, sniff. Just like us, thought Billy; keep on trying for something new, but always the same old thing.

He gazed gloomily at the back of the Tote. The green oval of the track was still dark, but one or two people were wandering into the stands. Shabby-looking lot. It wasn't a big track, never paid much except in the boom year, '46. Yet they kept on coming, two nights a week, the men washed up after the day's work, the women, sharp-eyed, cautious, putting their two bobs on the forecast.

Well, he'd soon be out of it; that was one thing. Call-up papers any day now, no deferment for a kennel-boy at a dog track, not national importance. And he wouldn't be sorry, though he knew some as would. Poppy for one. Perhaps she would come out with him and perhaps she wouldn't. . . . He'd show her. Just wait till he got his draft, and see how she liked that.

Perhaps it would be Germany and the fräuleins. Gaunt, ruined buildings at the back of the Tote and himself in his battle blouse and beret strolling down the street, with the Jerries making way for him, and a woman in a black bodice, half open, leaning from a window. Or Malaya, maybe, where the jungle grew thick and lush behind the car park, and him snaking from tree to tree, Sten gun at the ready, and Poppy, only darker, with a flower in her hair, in front of a hut of palm leaves, in one of those sarongs, like the girl on the pictures.

Wherever it was, no more perishing dogs. He shifted to gaze disdainfully at the line of kennels, up and down, sniff, sniff, nothing better to do.

Then he stiffened. One of the kennels was empty. Which was it? Number four—no, five. Comforter, that was it, three-year-old bitch, too short in the quarters, good head, but never lively. Fear took him. Comforter was Mr. Digby's dog; him and Mr. Bunn, joint owners. If anything had happened to her, Mr. Digby would slit him up soon as spit.

Billy checked an impulse to rush; that would only bring someone down on him. He walked over slowly, carelessly, like a man who had just thought of something, but it didn't matter, plenty of time. The wire at the back was bent open at one corner. Careless lot of beggars, no inspection, just what you'd expect at this track. And then the ruddy bitch must have worked at it and wriggled out.

He thought quickly. What lay at the back there? Just a yard. If the gate were shut, she couldn't get out of that. He made for the passgate at the end. Once out of sight, he scurried. The far gate was shut. And there she was, safe at the other end, her muzzle down into something.

She made no attempt to move as he came up to her, and then, with horror, he saw why. Someone had left out a tin plate of dinner, meat and scraps. She was three parts through it and, seeing him coming, was wolfing down the rest in quick swallows, flashing her head half round and growling.

He waited until she had finished. The damage was done already, no use risking a slash on his hand. Then he called softly, and with a lick of the platter she came over to him, friendly. 'Course she was friendly with all that grub inside her. And less than two hours to the race. She wasn't going to win anyhow, but now she'd go round like some old woman's pug. She'd waddle. She'd be so far out the back that even the public would notice. Not that they'd care, for not many would have their money on her. But all the boys would know. In particular, Mr. Digby would know. At this, Billy Dagjatt shuddered.

The bitch might not even get into the race at all. Shouldn't, by rights. The vet had only to pass his hand under her belly and he'd know she'd been fed. No food for six hours before the race; that was the rule.

But, of course, old Doc Winters wouldn't spot it with the Scotch he'd have inside him by then; same every night, he'd pass a dog with three legs and never notice.

Billy got hold [illegible] Comforter, took her to the back of her kennel and pushed her through the gap in the wire. He twisted it closed behind her. Not much of a job, but it would hold. She wouldn't want to roam any more, and anyhow he'd watch she didn't.

Now he had to get round the front again, on to his stool, looking as though nothing had happened, and think.

Even if he could find Mr. Digby, which he doubted, he wouldn't dare tell him. Billy Dagjatt wilted at the thought of telling Mr. Digby. Anybody else you could bluff, but not Mr. Digby. He didn't move fast, Mr. Digby, with all that weight on him; sort of dignified like, but terrible.

Billy sat on his stool and stared gloomily at Comforter.

The bitch looked back at him, contented, almost loving, passing her tongue reminiscently over her nose.

AT this time, Mr. Digby was discussing a pint with his friend and partner, Mr. Bunn, in the private of the Plume of Feathers, on the corner just outside the track gates, where the buses stopped.

Mr. Digby was privately aware that only sixteen pounds remained in the kitty and, if anything went wrong with the first two races, he would be compelled to the sort of expedient he had not practised for some years now. And he was lighter in those days.

"Trevelyan in the first race, I fancy," he remarked to Mr. Bunn, in confidential tones just loud enough to be overheard.

Mr. Digby well knew that Trevelyan had as much chance of winning the first race as Her Royal Highness's corgi, but just down the bar was Mr. Blackburn, a young gentleman of means, who occasionally backed his fancy on Mr. Digby's book. Sometimes he could be talked into as much as a fiver, could Mr. Blackburn.

Mr. Bunn was uneasily aware of what was going on. He was never happy about these ruses employed by his friend and partner. Mr. Bunn was not a happy soul. He had never trusted inside information since that day when, against all medical forecasts, Mrs. Bunn had presented him with twins. It was all very well for Mr. Digby, a single man, in a manner of speaking. But Mr. Bunn had family responsibilities. He was three pounds seven and six behind now with the separation allowance, and the court missionary was threatening to turn nasty. He watched uneasily as Mr. Blackburn rose to the bait.

"Evening, Mr. Digby," said this latter, moving up. "Time for another?"

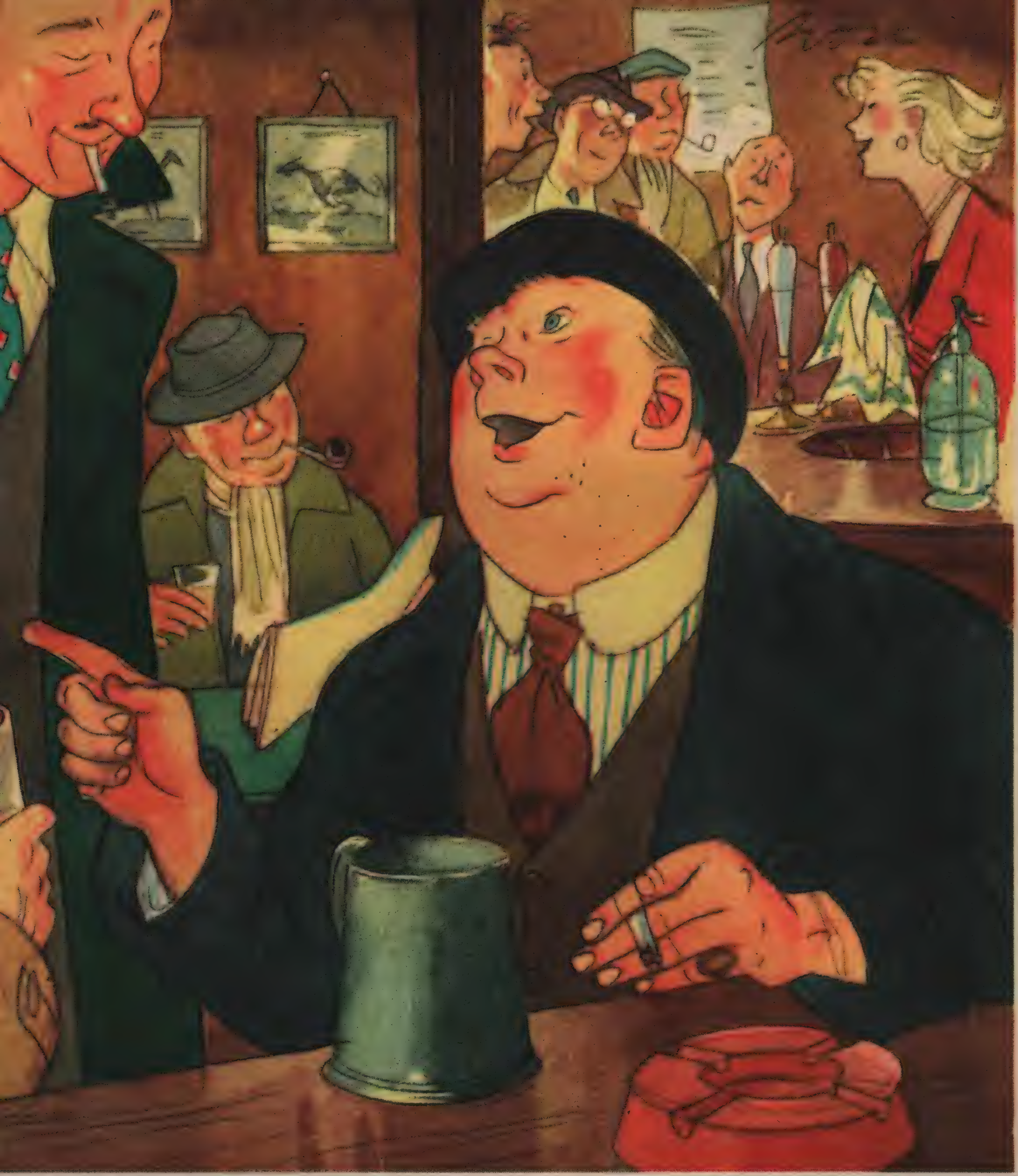
Mr. Digby judiciously consulted the clock and had to admit that there was.

"What'll you give me on Trevelyan?" inquired Mr. Blackburn.

Mr. Digby pondered. "By rights," he said, "he should be odds on. When we get on the track and the word goes round, he *will* be odds on. I don't fancy laying him at all, and that's the truth. He's a certainty, that dog. Am I right, Mr. Bunn?"

"Can't be certain about any dog, not these days," said Mr. Bunn cautiously.

"You're right," agreed Mr. Digby. "He's



one his partner was putting over on the young man. He watched Mr. Digby with growing uneasiness

right there, Mr. Blackburn. Now, in the early days it was different. Tricks? I have to laugh, just remembering 'em. Chewing gum between the pads, eh, Mr. Bunn? Stopping the hare, just a flick, as it went round. Substituting one dog for another. Why, bless me," said Mr. Digby, laughing at the memory, "in the early days they'd paint a dog all over, head to foot, to run him as another. I've seen 'em, at some of the country tracks in those days, bringing dogs out from behind the bushes, dripping with paint. You knew what was going to win all right, in the old days. But not now," said Mr. Digby, gravely, "it's been cleaned up. Cleaner than horse racing, it is. The luck of the race, that's what counts now. Take this Trevelyan. I think he's going to win. But I may be wrong. That's where the enjoyment comes in. How much were you thinking of putting on him, Mr. Blackburn, if I gave you, let's say, two to one?"

"Three quid?"

"I ought not to do it. Mr. Bunn won't like it."

It was now quite evident that Mr. Bunn did not like it.

"But what are we here for," inquired Mr. Digby, "if we can't have a bit of fun? Mr. Blackburn's a friend of ours, isn't he? I'll take you. We'll have to fix it up on the track—the landlord here is a bit particular. You come and see me over there, Mr. Blackburn, and I'll accommodate you. What the hell, it's all in the game."

Mr. Blackburn expressed his thanks. "By the way," he inquired, "what about your own bitch in the third race?"

"Comforter?" said Mr. Digby, musing. He was calculating quickly that Mr. Blackburn would not back the bitch in any case. It was just a friendly inquiry, so why not tell him the truth? Mr. Digby was a firm believer in the truth when it could be told with safety. Gave the clients confidence.

He leaned over to Mr. Blackburn and advised: "Don't touch her. She's slow out of the trap and she'll be baulked on the bend. Keep off her, Mr. Blackburn, if you want my opinion."

"Thanks, old man," said Mr. Blackburn gratefully. "You're a sport. How about a quick half?"

"No time," said Mr. Digby reluctantly, getting ponderously off his stool. "Business first. See you over there, Mr. Blackburn."

BILLY DAGJATT gazed gloomily from the kennels across to the track. The second race had just ended (funny Trevelyan winning the first, unexpected that was), and soon he must lead out Comforter. His stomach turned and his forehead was damp under the cap.

She took the muzzle sweetly, the bitch, and small wonder. No trouble to handle, she was so happy. For a moment he wildly considered knocking her out—chunk of wood, or the stool—but he hadn't the guts. Or he could run for it. But it was no use running from Mr. Digby, not in the end, not unless the call-up papers came tomorrow, first post, on the mat, thump, report recruiting centre, pronto.

Miserably he took her on the lead, out to where the stewards stood, in gaiters and bowler hats, smoking cigars, and the lights coming up on the track, a soft green, and old Doc Winters squinting at their rumps as though he could see.

She walked sweetly round the parade. Some of the others gave trouble, but not Comforter, not after that meal. When he had handed her over to be put in the trap, he went away as far as he could, to a shadow below a corner of the stands, where he could just see the track, but could not be seen.

The hare started its run, and the crowd hushed. The big white numbers on the Tote stopped revolving. And the dogs tumbled out of the traps like fish from a basket. Then the crowd began to murmur the way trees murmur in a wind. There was a dog out in front, first away from the traps, first at the bend, going like a Derby winner. Jeez, it was Comforter!

Billy Dagjatt stared and stared. She was extended now, three lengths in front and gaining. The crowd was swaying and creaking in the gale. Four lengths now and some dog, a brindle, making an effort behind her, but not a chance. In the straight, she even spurted and drew clean away.

Billy went out in a daze to catch her, the crowd roaring and moving, and she came up to him pleased as a cat on cream, and fresh as though she'd walked it.

He'd heard of such a thing before, thought Billy as he led her in, but he'd never seen it. He'd heard tell of dogs, just one dog in ten thousand, that ran better on top of a heavy meal. So it was true. The cussed little bitch, thought Billy, gazing in wonder down at Comforter, and his heart singing. What a turn-up for Billy Dagjatt, he sang to himself. No one would ever know now. No one would guess. And he would never have to tell Mr. Digby. . . .

Mr. Digby, meanwhile, was extricating himself from a little temporary trouble. A matter of four pounds ten. He caught a departing Mr. Bunn by the elbow and extracted from him a reluctant three pounds. Mr. Bunn protested tearfully that it was for the wife, and the court missionary was turning nasty about it.

"Never mind about the court missionary," murmured Mr. Digby. "After Thursday you can pension him off. Don't you see? We've made our fortunes. After Thursday."

"Made our fortunes," said Mr. Bunn bitterly. "All I sees is that our own bitch wins and cleans us out. Fat lot of blooming fortunes we made."

"You never see farther than your nose, Charlie," replied Mr. Digby, taking the three pounds. "I'm telling you we're on to the best thing in all my experience of dog racing."

There was still thirty bob he needed, but luckily Mr. Blackburn came along. "You might have told me about Comforter," he said, but not nastily, remembering Trevelyan.

"She won, that I admit," said Mr. Digby handsomely, "but I won't deceive you, being an old friend. If you ask me, it was a flash in the pan."

"She's the one for my money, next time she comes up," argued Mr. Blackburn. "You got something there, after tonight."

"Well, she comes up Thursday," said Mr. Digby. "I'll take a fiver on her now, if you're minded that way, evens."

Mr. Bunn emitted a small groan.

"Done," cried Mr. Blackburn, handing it over.

"Make a note, Charlie," said Mr. Digby. "Mr. Blackburn, a fiver on Comforter to win the third race Thursday, evens. What the hell, we'll have a bit of sport, eh? Don't pay any attention to Mr. Bunn, he has an ulcer in his stomach."

MR. BUNN followed morosely to the Plume of Feathers and gazed with deep sorrow into the pint Mr. Digby bought him. Mr. Bunn could foresee a change of occupation in the near future, and he felt he was getting too old for it.

"Don't you trust me, Charlie?" inquired Mr. Digby, gently quizzical.

"I think you've gone clean off your rocker," confessed Mr. Bunn.

"No vision," said Mr. Digby complacently. "That's your trouble, boy."

"What's the game, then?" asked Mr. Bunn, without much interest.

"After tonight, the bitch will be a cert for the third race Thursday. Correct?"

"She'll start at odds on. What's the good of

Continued on page 22

Sergeant Siddons, mountain rescuer

On the worst winter nights, Siddons and his men are called out to search for crashed planes or lost hikers. Sometimes it's a false alarm; more often it's tragedy

by DON EVERITT

With map and walkie-talkie microphone, Flight Sergeant Siddons pinpoints one of his patrols

A "corpse" strapped to a stretcher sledge. Siddons (right) says he brings few back alive

LATE ONE WINTER AFTERNOON in 1949, the Tannoy rustled into life over the R.A.F. Coastal Command station at Kinloss, near Inverness, and an urgent voice said: "Mountain rescue squad report for duty at once. I say again—mountain rescue squad report for duty at once." In various parts of the airfield about thirty young men, most of them overalled, dirty and tired, instantly dropped their tools and headed at the double towards a hut behind one of the hangars.

Inside the hut, meanwhile, Flight Sergeant Don Siddons, the n.c.o. in charge of the squad, was making repeated, rapid phone calls as he pored over one of the inch-to-the-mile maps which covered the walls of his office. From police stations, gamekeepers and farmers, he was trying to establish the last that had been seen or heard of a Fleet Air Arm Firefly training aircraft which had been reported two hours overdue at nearby Lossiemouth airfield. It was believed to have crashed in a snowstorm in the Lochnagar area, near the Balmoral royal estate.

The flight sergeant's task was far from easy. In the atrocious weather which had suddenly blown up over the Highlands, few people living along the aircraft's course had even heard it. Of those who had, several were hazy about times. Siddons thought the problem was solved when a police sergeant brought to the phone a woman who said she had actually seen the aircraft. Giving an approximate time and the plane's direction, she added: "I heard a dull thump about two or three minutes later." To Siddons this was vital information; he began to calculate the rough position of the crash. About ten minutes later the police sergeant rang through again. He said: "What that woman heard was not a plane crashing at all. Her old man was cutting wood in a shed and the cylinder-head gasket on his saw exploded."

Siddons next spoke to a gamekeeper who also said he had heard the crash. Then another problem arose. It was learned that a local quarry had been blasting during the day. While Siddons and his men were on their way, a policeman cycled nine miles to make certain that the noise believed to be the crash had not been a quarry explosion.

Search In Blinding Snow

The squad reached the position chosen for base camp just before seven thirty. The police and gamekeepers, who were there to meet them, disagreed with the flight sergeant over the position of the crash. They insisted it would be farther into the mountains than he suggested. As all of them knew the area intimately and one had actually heard the plane, he accepted their judgment. At eight o'clock, with the snow swirling with increasing ferocity down the darkening mountainsides, the squad split into search parties and moved off.

At 1 a.m. they returned to base for a breather. Ninety minutes later they went out again. By this time the wind and snow were approaching blizzard proportions and, with visibility almost nil, they could only keep shouting out, hoping that the airmen were still alive and would hear them. Shortly after dawn they went back to base for breakfast, but within half an hour they were out on the mountains again. Except for two one-hour breaks for lunch and tea, they stayed out searching in the blinding snow for more than twelve hours.

Daylight had improved visibility to ten yards, but—though it hardly seemed possible—the weather was worsening. At lunch the wind force was more than fifty miles an hour. The gamekeepers and policemen gathered at the base camp said that Siddons would be foolish to go out again. "Your chances of finding anything in this are a thousand to one," they said. Siddons laughed and said good-naturedly: "Okay then, we'll take that chance."

But at nine o'clock that night he had to admit temporary defeat. The snow was driving so hard and so thick that the rescuers' powerful torches could hardly pierce it to show them where to put their feet. Siddons spent a wakeful night, pondering over the position of the crash. At five o'clock he got up, roused some of his colleagues and said: "We're going to search where we originally planned—and to hell with the gamekeepers."

Misled By Crash Noise

Less than two hours later they had found the wrecked plane, lying near the top of the 3,125-foot Miekel Pap, and within a hundred yards of the spot Siddons had first marked on his map. Only 500 yards away the squad had stopped for a snack twenty-four hours earlier on their way to search the area suggested by the gamekeepers. "They had been misled by the noise of the crash," Siddons says. "It had been muffled by the clouds. Anyway, it was too late. Both airmen had been killed outright."

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The "dead" man is brought back to camp. Though training is rigorous, there is a long waiting list of volunteers for the mountain rescue squad

times also gone to the aid of trapped sheep and other wayward animals.

Says Siddons: "On an average we get about twelve calls a year. Curiously enough, the name *rescue* squad is tragically inept so far as crashed aircraft are concerned. Very few people are brought back alive. In fact, since I've been at Kinloss I've only once found an airman still alive—and he died on the way down the mountain."

Siddons and two drivers are the squad's only full-time members. The rest, mostly National Servicemen, volunteer for the job in addition to their normal duties. Few of them have any previous climbing experience. This means that Siddons has to keep the squad in continuous training. Led alternately by Flight Lieutenant Dawes and Siddons, they spend forty-four hours every week—Wednesdays and weekends—on full-scale searches for old wrecks and planted dummy bodies. Even then, they can by no means be called experienced climbers.

Not long ago, a rambler about to descend a peak in Glencoe forgot to put the leather loop of his ice-axe over his wrist before glissading over a snowfield. As he slithered down, dragging the axe through the snow, the point struck a rock and the handle flew out of his grasp. Unchecked, he sped down the one-in-two gradient, over a twenty-foot ledge and on again until a boulder stopped him at the edge of a seventy-foot drop on to rocks. His companion, an experienced Australian climber, saw that he lay injured and went down to an hotel for help. A civilian rescue party was formed, but only the Australian was capable of getting back to his friend. While he fed him and made him as comfortable as he could, a call was sent to Kinloss.

A Nerve-racking Moment

At that time, only two of the twenty-four men that Siddons needed for the rescue had done any snow climbing, probably the most difficult form of mountaineering. The fact that this particular effort was to be on the trickiest climb in Glencoe did not make him any happier. Of many nerve-racking moments during the ascent, one is outstanding in his memory. "We had to get over a large ice corniche (an overhanging ice structure) above a drop of about a hundred feet. It was impossible to cut through the corniche because the ice was too solid. I went first and the other experienced chap was last. I got over the top and then couldn't find a single place to secure the rope. I just dug my heels in the ice and prayed. I don't think I've ever sweated so much as when those boys came over the top. If just one of them had slipped we'd have all gone. They were terrific."

To move the injured man successfully on a stretcher the squad had first to haul him to the top of the peak, then take him down the way they had come. "It took us nearly five hours to get him up the snowfield, and three hours to get him down to our ambulance."

Dressed For The Arctic

The rescue squad is completely mobile and self-contained. Its equipment includes a three-ton lorry, a jeep, an ambulance, a radio van, tents, tarpaulins, stretchers, sledge stretchers, ropes, pyrotechnics, snow-shoes, ice-axes, walkie-talkie radios, navigational and medical equipment, and food and cooking utensils. Dressed for action, the men look fit for an Arctic expedition. On top of a khaki battledress they wear thick white sweaters, sea-boot socks, climbing boots, windproof trousers and jackets, possibly a duffle coat and, if necessary, waterproofs. Despite all this paraphernalia, in an emergency they can be on their way within fifteen minutes of the call going out over the Tannoy.

"Almost invariably," says Flight Sergeant Siddons, "we get called out at night or dusk and in the thick of bad weather—such are the conditions in which pilots get pranged and climbers lost."

At the base camp the squad splits into search parties of three—navigator, first-aid man, and signaller, who carries a walkie-talkie to keep in touch with base. Systematically, they search the area. As soon as they find the wreck they radio the fact and fire off red Very lights to call the other teams.

"False alarms are not infrequent in rescue work," says Siddons. Some time ago the North Wales squad, stationed at Valley in Anglesey, had a call to the Snowdon area. A man aged seventy was overdue from a morning stroll. Five minutes after the squad set out, however, he returned, tired and hungry, after having walked "a little farther than I had expected." The hotel people were so busy feeding their guest and putting him to bed that they forgot all about the squad. After searching well into the evening the rescuers checked with the hotel and heard the news.

One afternoon several people saw a plane flying low over the 3,054-foot Cumberland peak, Skiddaw. A few moments later smoke billowed from the top of the mountain and the nearest rescue unit—at Harpur Hill, Derbyshire—was promptly called out. After driving 150 miles they found only a small peat fire.

Another problem facing Don Siddons is the numerous wartime wrecks which were never charted. "In two days recently in Sutherland—that's almost virgin country, you know—we found four of them, including the Duke of Kent's Sunderland." In this area some aircraft have never been found. The search for a Mosquito, lost on a training flight, has been going on for a year. In an extensive check-up on the day of the accident, Siddons and his colleagues covered an area almost 200 miles long.

Lucky Escape On Old Rope

Chesterfield-born Donald Ernest Siddons had practically no climbing experience before he went to Kinloss. The little that he had was gained with a Scout troop on the Derbyshire hills before he joined the R.A.F. as an apprentice wireless fitter in 1937. His first plane rescue work was in the desert. From 1940 he spent two years chasing across Libya and Tunis picking up British airmen on both sides of the lines.

Siddons emphatically declares that his job is generally far from spectacular or dangerous. "We're too well equipped and too careful," he says. He has, however, had some lucky escapes. Once, at Brora on the Sutherland coast, a farmer asked him to rescue some sheep from a 600-foot rockface rising sheer from a lochside. A ewe had worked her way about 100 feet down the precipice to give birth to two lambs, and could not get them back. Needing an additional rope, Siddons borrowed one from the farmer and was lowered to the sheep. As he dangled above the loch, he lassoed the animals one at a time and they were hauled up.

When he himself got back to the top, the farmer thanked him profusely and said: "Good bit of rope this. Do you know, it must have been lying out in all weathers for nigh on three years."

THE END

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM KEMP

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that to us?" said Mr. Bunn gloomily.

"We'll give 'em a better price than that, Charlie. Evens, see? Maybe two to one. That'll get some money on her, won't it? We might get two hundred quid bet on her. Or even three hundred," said Mr. Digby, expansively.

"But you're nuts. She'll win."

Mr. Digby stroked his jowl with podgy but powerful fingers. "That's what they'll all think," he said happily. "When we tell 'em it was only a flash in the pan, and she won't win Thursday, they won't believe us. They'll force us to take the money. They'll come and give it to us with both hands, the mugs. Cripes, I've been waiting for a chance like this all my life."

"You mean she won't win Thursday?"

Mr. Digby put on his bowler hat, got down from his stool and gave his partner a fat wink. "Chance'd be a fine thing," was all that Mr. Digby would say.

For the next three days, Mr. Bunn lived in despair and desperation, gathering in the bets on Comforter. Mr. Digby had been quite right; nothing would stop the people backing her. Nothing. When Mr. Digby protested that the bitch would lose, the people simply laughed at him and put more money on. "We don't know what you're up to," they said, "but we're not falling for it." And they took evens.

They had two hundred and thirty pounds on the book before they got to the track on the Thursday night and, once there, it went over the three hundred. Mr. Digby scouted Mr. Bunn's nervous suggestion that they should lay some of it off. And in that, Mr. Bunn had to admit, he was right. Even if they could lay it off, which he doubted, they couldn't get enough to cover themselves. They were in it now, one-way street, sink or swim.

The dogs were parading now for the third race, but Mr. Bunn couldn't look. He couldn't look, not now. The tick-tack men were having hysterics and the crowd was settling in the stands. The lights were up. Sweating, he went back to his partner.

"How much?" he whispered. But Mr. Digby was still taking the bets rather grimly. "Four hundred, thirteen, eight," he replied, awed. It was beginning to tell even on Mr. Digby, if you knew him well and knew the signs. The back of his neck, the big roll between his bowler brim and his collar, had gone a blue shade of red.

Then Mr. Bunn's nerve broke. "I'm off now," he said desperately. "I'll crawl, or something. Lock meself in the Gents. Anything."

Mr. Digby's great paw gripped him. "Don't be a ruddy fool, Charlie. I tell you it's all right."

"How can it be all right? Look at the time she put up Monday."

"Monday's Monday," said Mr. Digby, "and today's today."

He was regaining his solid calm, beginning to smile again, mysterious.

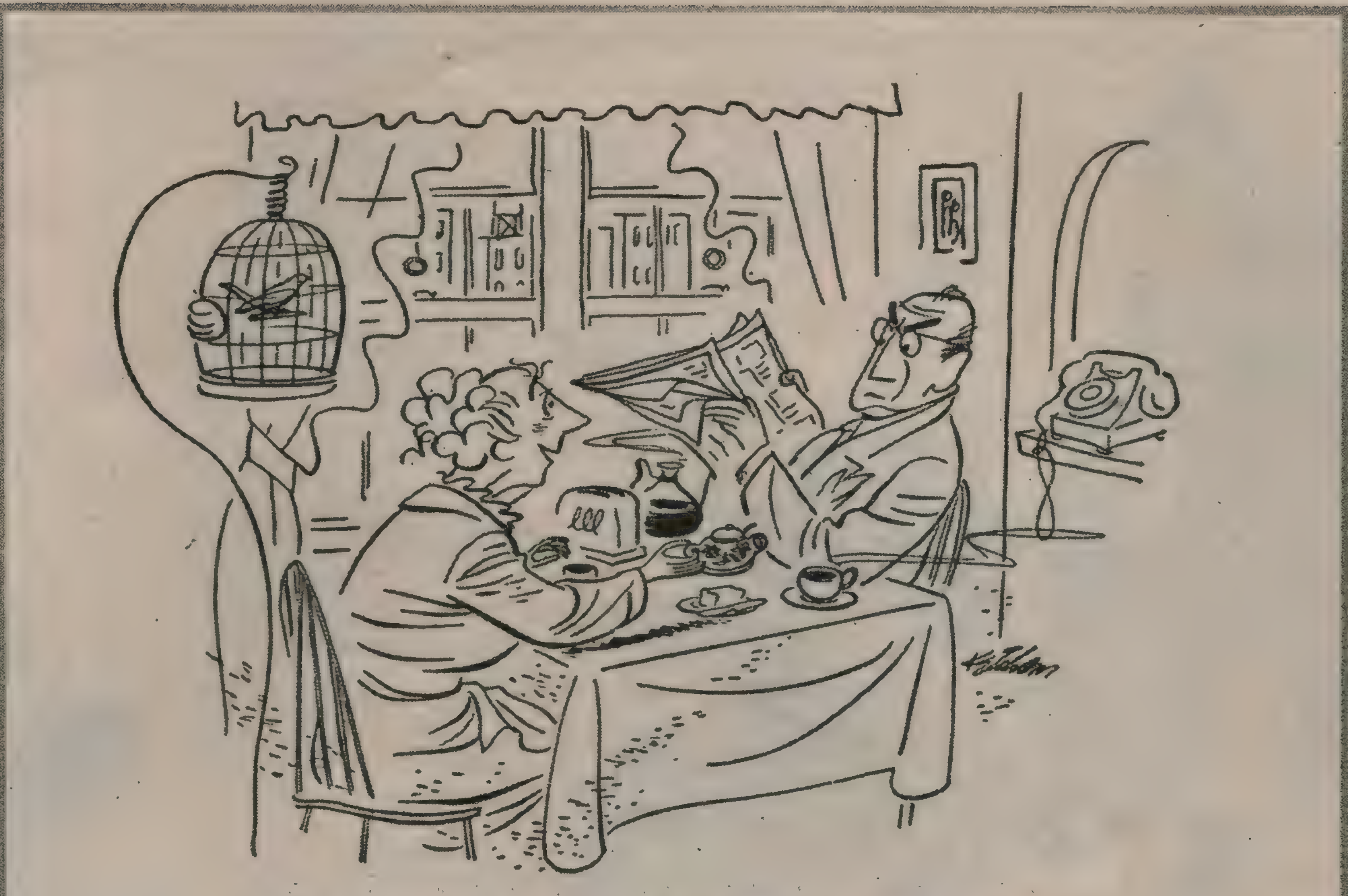
"You got to tell me what you done," said Mr. Bunn urgently.

"I fixed it all right with a couple of the boys. It's all okey-doke. One of 'em came round and slipped me the word. It's done."

"But what?" insisted Mr. Bunn. "What's done?"

Mr. Digby, reaching for a cigarette, smiled a great, fat, wise smile. "Half an hour back," he whispered, "two of the boys got into the kennels and gave her a heavy meal."

Mr. Digby grinned like a bishop counting the Easter offering. "Did I do right, Charlie?" he demanded, benign. THE END



"Of *course* I know that you don't take sugar. I just wanted to hear you speak"

I FOUND A NEW VOICE

Continued from page 13

intended to help me, and was shown the instrument she wanted me to use, I felt a pang of disappointment.

The instrument itself, certainly better than nothing, was called a "false larynx," and consisted of a metal cylinder with a hole in one side, and rubber tubing coming out of the top and bottom. I was told to put the upper end of the tube into my mouth, and the lower one through the opening in my throat which led to what was left of my windpipe. She showed me how to take a breath, then put my thumb over the opening in the cylinder or sound-box, and breathe out—keeping the thumb on the cylinder.

The first time I did this a loud, tinny "Ah" came forth. I won't say it was exactly music to my ears, but it was a beginning. Gradually, I was taught to shape the sound into words by using the tongue, lips and palate, and within six weeks I could talk fairly fluently. But the sound I made was so loud—rather like a duck quacking, plus the tinny noise—that, after my first delight had worn off, I found myself resorting more often than not to pencil and paper. In fact, for a year I worked at my office usually without the aid of the false larynx. I resigned myself to the fact that I must choose between the instrument and complete dumbness.

Then a wonderful thing happened. When I went back for yet another operation in March, 1942, the speech therapist gave me the most exciting piece of news I had had.

At first I didn't know what she meant when she told me: "I'm going to suggest to you an alternative way of speaking. "It's called oesophageal speech." She was frank. "You'll be the first person I've ever taught. The idea was conceived in Vienna a good ten years ago, but very few people here know about it."

Then she went on to explain how, in normal speech, the lungs force air past the vocal chords to set them vibrating. "You've got no vocal chords, but I'm going to teach you to use your foodpipe instead. I shall teach you to talk by swallowing air and forcing it out so that it vibrates the edges of the foodpipe. This will make sound waves which you can learn to form into words by using the lips and tongue in the usual way."

Then she gave me a simpler description. "Ever had a good square meal or drunk fizzy lemonade that has made you want to—let's put it bluntly—belch?" I told her I had, but I still didn't see quite how I should ever be able to talk that way.

I Soon Got The Idea

She gave me my first demonstration. Frankly, I wanted to laugh. Women don't belch as easily as men usually, and anyway, to try to demonstrate this type of speech when your own vocal chords are intact is far more difficult than for someone like myself, without any. But she gave me the idea, and her own lack of embarrassment encouraged me. Before lesson number one was over I was belching to order reasonably well.

At first I found I was apt to swallow too far down, which used to give me an attack of hiccoughs and a stomach ache. It took two or three weeks to get the belch coming up freely. I went twice a week to the speech therapist, and practised at home. In those early days my wife and I had some good laughs over it.

Within a month I spoke my first words to the speech therapist. They were as wonderful a sound to her as to myself, and they had a meaning for her: "Thank you," I said. To say them I had had to swallow twice—one swallow for each word. Gradually I learned to say three words per swallow, then to swallow so shallowly that I could say whole sentences without a pause.

Within a year I was speaking well enough to have my voice recorded for a demonstration record, and although yet another plastic operation found me back in hospital in May, 1943, I felt a new man. In fact, while still in hospital I gladly accepted an invitation to demonstrate the speech to a gathering of medical men in London. Among them were some American doctors.

One of them came up to me afterwards. "It's quite remarkable. You sound just like a normal person with a slightly sore throat. Fellows like you back home using the false larynx have formed themselves into a fraternity called The Lost Chord Club. You might like to do the same —but you'd have to change the title to the *New* Chord Club."

Looking back, I realize my biggest disadvantage in learning this wonderful new speech was the lack of opportunity for meeting others like myself. There was nobody to compare notes with and, although within four or five months I was using quite long sentences and making myself understood, I am sure that my biggest enemy was my own doubt.

The other week I was called, as I have often been, to demonstrate to a doubting patient at a London hospital. The speech therapist told me privately that the man was badly lacking in confidence, and refused to believe in the possibility of a new voice. I had a long, one-sided chat with him, and could see his amazement growing as I told him all about my own experiences. I have heard since that he is making wonderful progress—seeing someone who was once in the same boat as himself was the best encouragement he could possibly have had.

Women, particularly, seem to need more encouragement than men in the early stages. As one speech therapist (herself a woman) told me: "I suppose women are more inhibited about belching than men. But when you come along and show them how they can sound eventually, the effect is miraculous."

Today I lead an absolutely normal life and feel healthier and happier even than before I lost my voice. At the office I can use the telephone freely and take the busiest of days in my stride. In fact, only my closest friends at the office have any idea that I am speaking without, as it were, having a proper voice.

Nothing To Worry About

Since the war my wife and I have gone in for old-time dancing. We attend dances sometimes as often as three evenings a week. I can enjoy a chat in between the Lancers and the County Cotillon with the best of them—and if I sound a bit hoarse, well, so do most people of my age (I am fifty-four) after two such energetic dances.

I am often asked by other patients I meet: "Is there anything you cannot do that a man with a normal voice can?" I always answer: "Nothing that I specially mind about." For instance, I am as active in my garden as I was before the war, growing all kinds of vegetables and fruits and still winning prizes for them. Nowadays I can't sing or yodel or shout. And since I can't swallow air and food at the same time, I am never likely to commit that breach of good manners—talking with your mouth full.

In fact, it has been worth all the weeks of patient practice to be able to talk again. Perhaps only those once afflicted like myself can ever know just *how* worth while. THE END

The man who may push Stalin into war

EDWARD CRANKSHAW writes a brilliant analysis of the character and present-day rôle of Vyacheslav Molotov in

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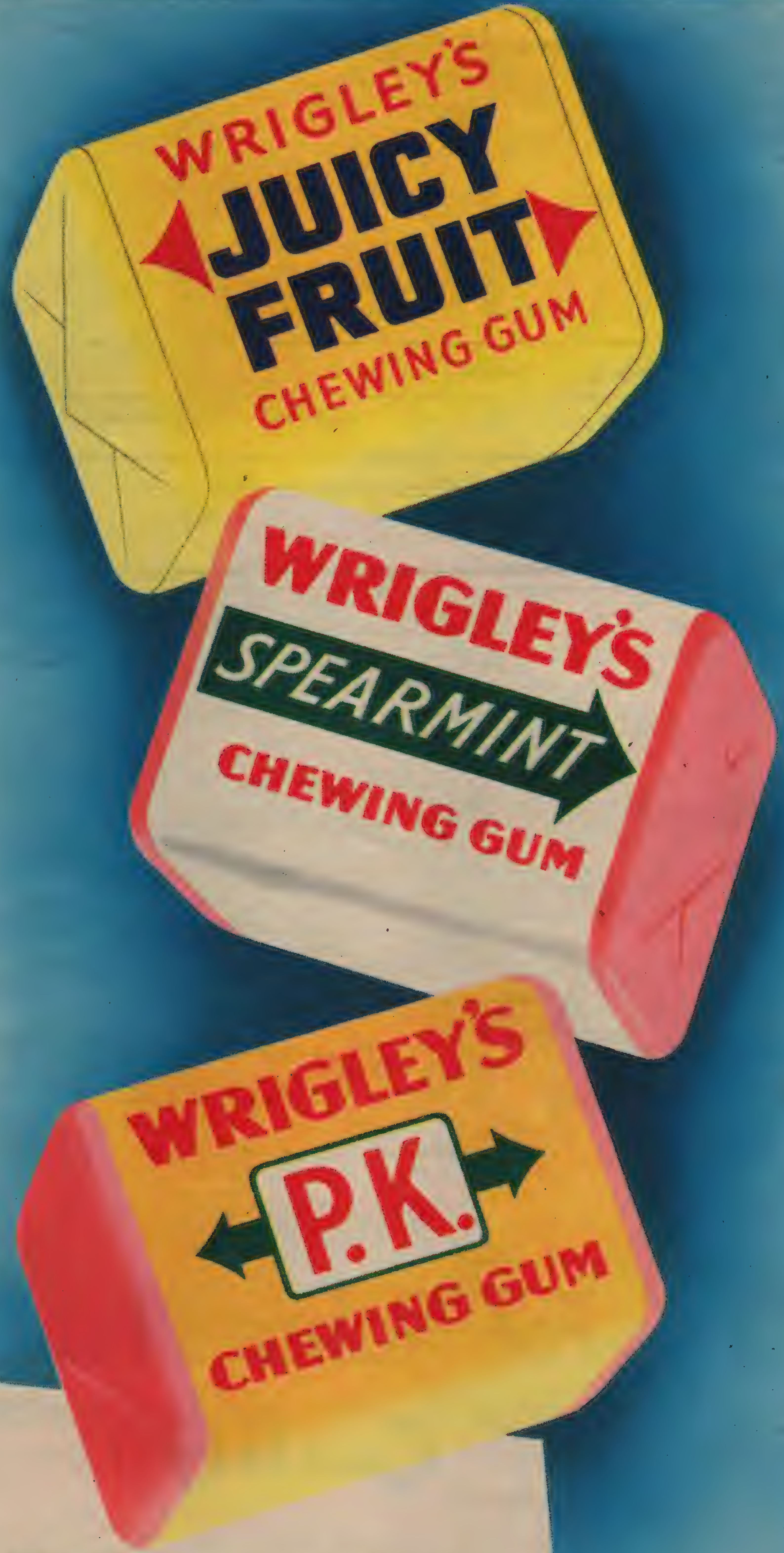
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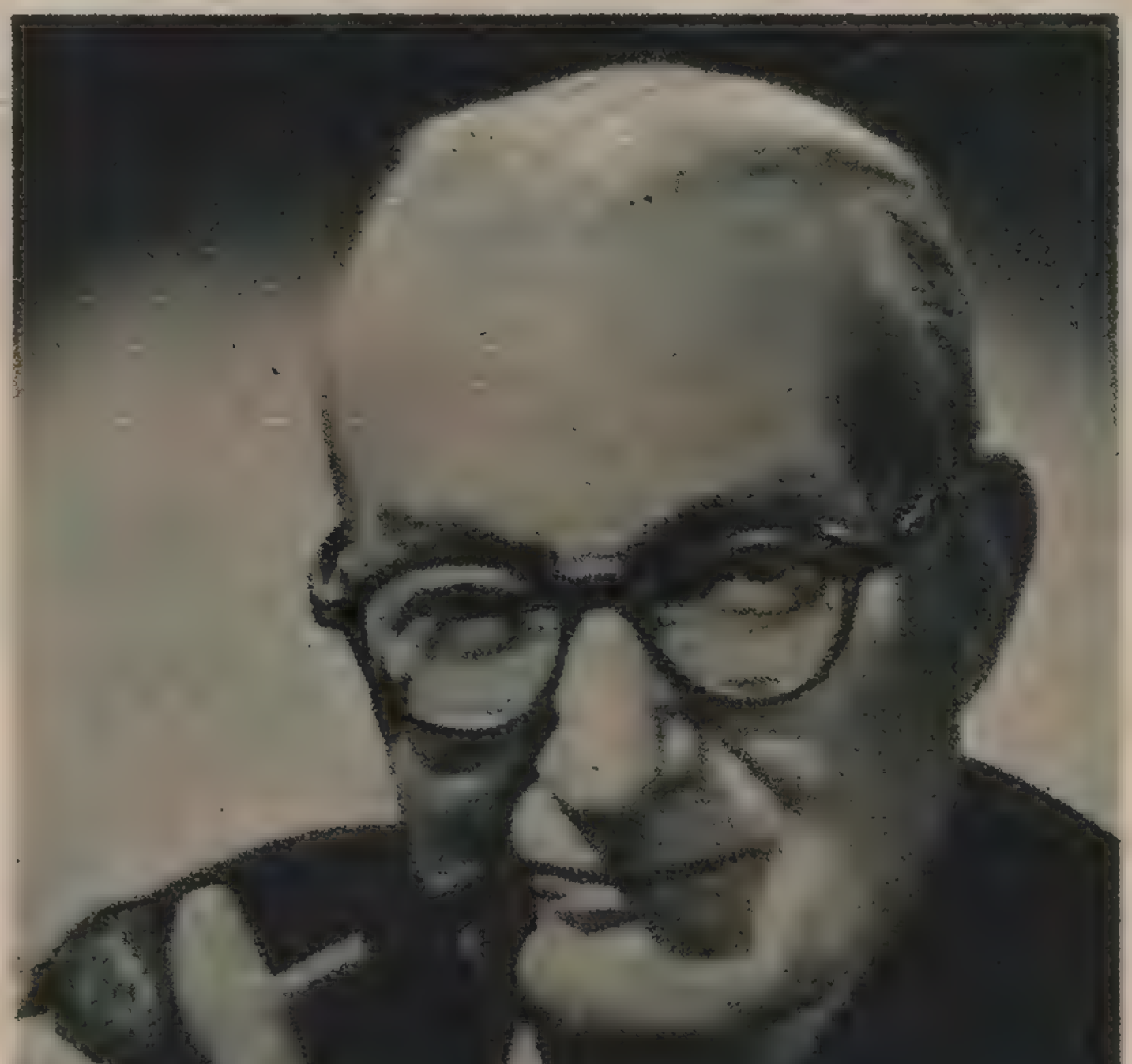

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FESTIVAL AT FARBRIDGE

Continued from page 12

the Admiral, a short, thick, leather-and-mahogany old boy, who began to frown and was obviously one to be avoided. The Commodore turned sharply to the other two, a stiff middle-aged fellow, proud and bloodshot, and a tubby little chap as red and bald as a new baby.

"From the West Farbridge Club," said Middleham. "Colonel Whatmore. Captain Mobbs. Commodore Tribe."

"Commodore?" said the Admiral.

"Courtesy rank," said the Commodore hastily. "Tell you about it later. Well, gentlemen, happy days! From Farbridge, eh? Don't know it yet but I've been meaning to have a look at it one day."

"Captain Mobbs," said Colonel Whatmore, "is our Conservative agent there, and he's done a remarkably fine job."

"Bravo, Captain!" cried the Commodore, who had no political convictions of any kind. "Thought you had a true-blue look about you."

"He had a bluer look this afternoon when the Admiral here had finished with him," said Middleham, guffawing.

"My godfathers, yes!" cried Captain Mobbs, bouncing a bit. "What the good old Navy did to me! Ow!"

Nobody roared louder at this than the Commodore, who could hardly finish his drink.

"Live here, Commodore?" Colonel Whatmore asked.

"In this very pub, don't you?" said Middleham.

"At the moment, yes, gentlemen," said the Commodore. "I've been giving a hand to the *M.F.A.* people here—as special adviser——"

"That's it, of course," said Middleham, suddenly proud of his acquaintance. "Dashed clever stuff, too."

"I subscribe," said Colonel Whatmore, looking at the Commodore with a new respect, "and read it regularly. Very sound publication. Eh, Mobbs? You see it, don't you?"

"Never miss it. Those reports from Russia," cried the Captain. "First-class. You've got a good man there."

"Between these four walls, gentlemen," said the Commodore, lowering his voice and half closing his eyes, although he was able to notice that even the Admiral looked impressed, "we have a remarkable man there. And when the whole story comes to be told—well, no more of that. Have to be careful, even here. You understand?" They nodded gravely, every face weighing a ton. The Commodore, without losing his grasp of them, now gradually brought his voice to a normal level. "We've agents everywhere, of course. It's taken some organizing. But now I've resigned, having seen them through the worst of it and left everything ticking over nicely. In strict confidence, if you don't mind, gentlemen. It's as well not to say too much about these things. We're living, as you fellows know only too well," he concluded impressively, "in difficult times."

"Gosh, yes," said Middleham, and ordered another round.

"If you don't mind my asking," said Colonel Whatmore, "have you any particular plans?"

"It's been suggested," the Commodore replied, quite truthfully, "that I should join one of the public services. I have to go up to town on Tuesday to see a man. Then—well, we'll see. I might find it amusing for a few months to handle some special form of public relations—plan a national campaign perhaps — that sort of thing."

"Quite," cried little Captain Mobbs. "Do a sound job, too, I imagine."

"I've had a certain amount of experience," the Commodore observed, modestly, "in various parts of the world. Excuse me a moment." He took Middleham on one side. "Something's just occurred to me, Middleham, old man," he whispered impressively. "I've accumulated rather a remarkable little collection of absolutely first-class recent books on foreign affairs, just the sort of stuff a fellow like you ought to have by him, to keep himself well informed. You know—*France at the Crossroads—The Italian Problem—The Aftermath of Potsdam—After MacArthur, What?*——"

"After MacArthur, *What?*" Middleham repeated, bewildered but respectful.

"Yes—*What*. That's the kind of thing. Packed with important information, official secrets given away right and left. Can't pick these things up in any bookshop, you know." Which was true enough. "Now the trouble is, I'm travelling light for a few months, and I don't want to leave these books here—no room for 'em and besides they'd be wasted. Now, my dear chap, after dinner—not now but after dinner—I want you to pop up to my room with me and take a look at those books. Apart from the value of the collection itself, their ordinary market value is round about forty pounds."

"Forty pounds!" Middleham was scared.

The Commodore put a reassuring hand upon his shoulder. "Forty pounds at least. You can see for yourself when you look at 'em. *But*——" and now he leaned forward and most delicately delivered every syllable into Middleham's left ear, "I'll let them go—to *you*—and I'll be obliged if you'll keep this quiet—for fifteen pounds. Fifteen, that's all." Here he stopped behaving like a Sicilian conspirator. "Just give me five minutes after dinner. Agreed? Fine!" He restored the young man, already solemn, his face lengthening with the weight of international secrets, to his golfing companions; after which he tactfully withdrew, to eat as good a dinner as they would have, in private and at no cost.

About nine, refreshed and jovial, the Commodore returned to the smoke and babble of the Saturday night lounge, then marched Middleham upstairs to his bedroom, where the review copies were on display on the dressing-table. "There you are, my dear fellow. And I don't think I need tell you that it's a superb collection which, of course, I could never have got together if it hadn't been for my work on *M.F.A.*"

"On what?" said Middleham, who had clearly done himself well and was now looking rather froggier than foxier.

"*M.F.A.* — you know, *Mostly Foreign Affairs*. We were talking about it before dinner, and the other fellows were saying some very nice things about it. Intelligent fellows, by the way." The Commodore was feeling in excellent form, and he found it a pleasure to listen to his own mellifluous tone.

"Very intelligent fellows," said Middleham, slowly, goggling a little. "Colonel Whatmore is a very big man in Farbridge. Very large factory there. Art-fissal shilks."

"Artificial silks? Really?"

"Yes—art-fissal shilks. Very big

THE HUMAN MACHINE

Stop moaning

GRUMBLING never improves a situation. It's as wearisome to the listener as it is wearing to the complainant. Anyone who indulges in it for long is on his way to becoming a mental and moral cripple.

"A small radius in space," said the late James Bridie, "may contain a world of experience." Chronic moaners who think that the world has nothing more to offer them, should learn that saying by heart—and profit by it.

by ROFFE THOMPSON

business.'' Middleham now turned his attention to the books again. He bent down and looked as if he were about to smell one of the largest volumes, a massive work, unreadable and unsaleable, entitled *Cross-currents in Swedish Foreign Policy,* then hastily jumped back as though it might bite him. Then, with a considerable effort, he became foxier rather than froggier, put up a forefinger and squinted at it, and said with an enormous air of low cunning: "Before dinner you said fifteen pounds. Remember?''

Yes, the Commodore remembered.

"No good,'' said Middleham, using the forefinger now to prod the Commodore's tie, which was his second-best and had pale pink and grey stripes and had been given to him in 1937 by the wife of a Peruvian lawyer. "Not having any, old boy. Twelve-pound-ten—or you can keep 'em. My last word. But cash, mind you.''

"It's a sacrifice,'' said the Commodore, "but if you want to settle for 'em here and now for twelve-pounds-ten, then I'll agree.''

In a kind of graceful slow motion, as if he were transacting business deep under water, Middleham produced twelve pound notes and a ten-shilling note from his wallet.

They returned to the lounge, now uncomfortably crowded. After half an hour of talk among the four of them, with more drinks, the Commodore found himself drawn away from the other two by Colonel Whatmore, who pulled his chair as close as possible and glared in his bloodshot fashion at the Commodore's right eye.

His manner suggested the commanding officer of the old school, big business, public affairs, together with the even heavier seriousness of the oldish man who had drunk too much and must at all costs carry his load with dignity.

"Tell you what, Tribe,'' he said. "Notice I'm dropping the *Commodore*? Quite deliberate. Think you ought to drop it, too. Have my reasons, of course. Always have my reasons.''

"I'm sure you have, Colonel,'' said the Commodore, heartily. "Call me Tribe—or Horace, for that's my name—or anything you fancy. But I think you were going to say something else,'' he added, anxious to steer the talk away from the subject of his mysterious rank.

"Right, I was. Clever of you to spot it. Doesn't surprise me. Had my eye on you tonight. Know that?''

"I suspected it once or twice, Colonel. And I said to myself 'Careful, my boy. That's a dam' sharp eye, too.' I warned myself 'No nonsense about that eye, Horace, my lad.' And was I right or was I wrong?'' The Commodore gave him a quick glance, wondering if he had not gone too far, but saw that all was well.

"You were right.'' Colonel Whatmore picked up his glass, looked severely at the Commodore over the top of it, drained it and gave a flick or two to his bristling grey moustache. "Tribe, I'm a man who has had to make quick decisions. In the Service. In business. In political matters. For example, our present Member, Major Bulfoss. Had to decide which of three candidates, all good candidates, we'd take. I said: 'We'll take Bulfoss.' Like that. 'We'll take Bulfoss.' ''

" 'We'll take Bulfoss,' '' the Commodore repeated, admiringly. "It's a great gift, Colonel. Sometimes I feel I have it, sometimes I feel I haven't. But you were saying?''

"I was saying that I'm a man used to making quick decisions. Have to be. Now, I've had my eye on you, and I believe you're a man I could use in my business. Public relations, perhaps. Or personnel management. That sort of thing—not the technical side, of course.''

"Of course,'' said the Commodore. "Artificial silk, isn't it?''

"It is. Now a lot of men,'' and the Colonel glared as if his hearer might be one of them, "would think you were too old. Nonsense! Prime of life, like me. Don't you agree?''

The Commodore agreed most fervently. And added that it was a pleasure to meet a man of the Colonel's independence of mind and sound judgment.

"Quite so,'' said Colonel Whatmore, solemnly, nodding a gracious acceptance of the tribute. "See what you mean. Now, tell you what I want you to do. Go up to town and see your man, if you like. No harm in that. But don't settle anything until you've seen me.'' He fumbled in his inside pocket and finally produced a card, which he handed over, and a diary, at which he stared for some time, looking vaguely surprised as if the entries had been written in some foreign language. "Could see you early on Wednesday morning in my office—Farbridge. Think you said you didn't know the town. Very decent, sensible sort of place.''

The Colonel jerked himself sharply round in his chair, as if dodging a huge missile, remained in that curious posture for a moment or two, during which he turned purple, and then heroically pushed himself on to his feet. "Don't forget,'' he said to the Commodore. "Want to see you. Matter of fact, taken a great fancy to you.''

"So have I,'' cried Captain Mobbs, enthusiastically shaking hands. "Any time you're in Farbridge, old boy, look me up. Captain Mobbs, Conservative office.''

"Don't worry, Mobbs. He'll be in Farbridge,'' the Colonel announced magnificently. "I'll bring him there.''

MRS. WATSON'S nephew, Daubenny Stevens, was a long, thin, youngish fellow, with a pale, fixed gaze, a drooping nose, and a mouth that promised nothing. He had the mean, administrator's trick of deliberately cutting out all helpful small talk, all the little ejaculations that lubricate conversation, of just

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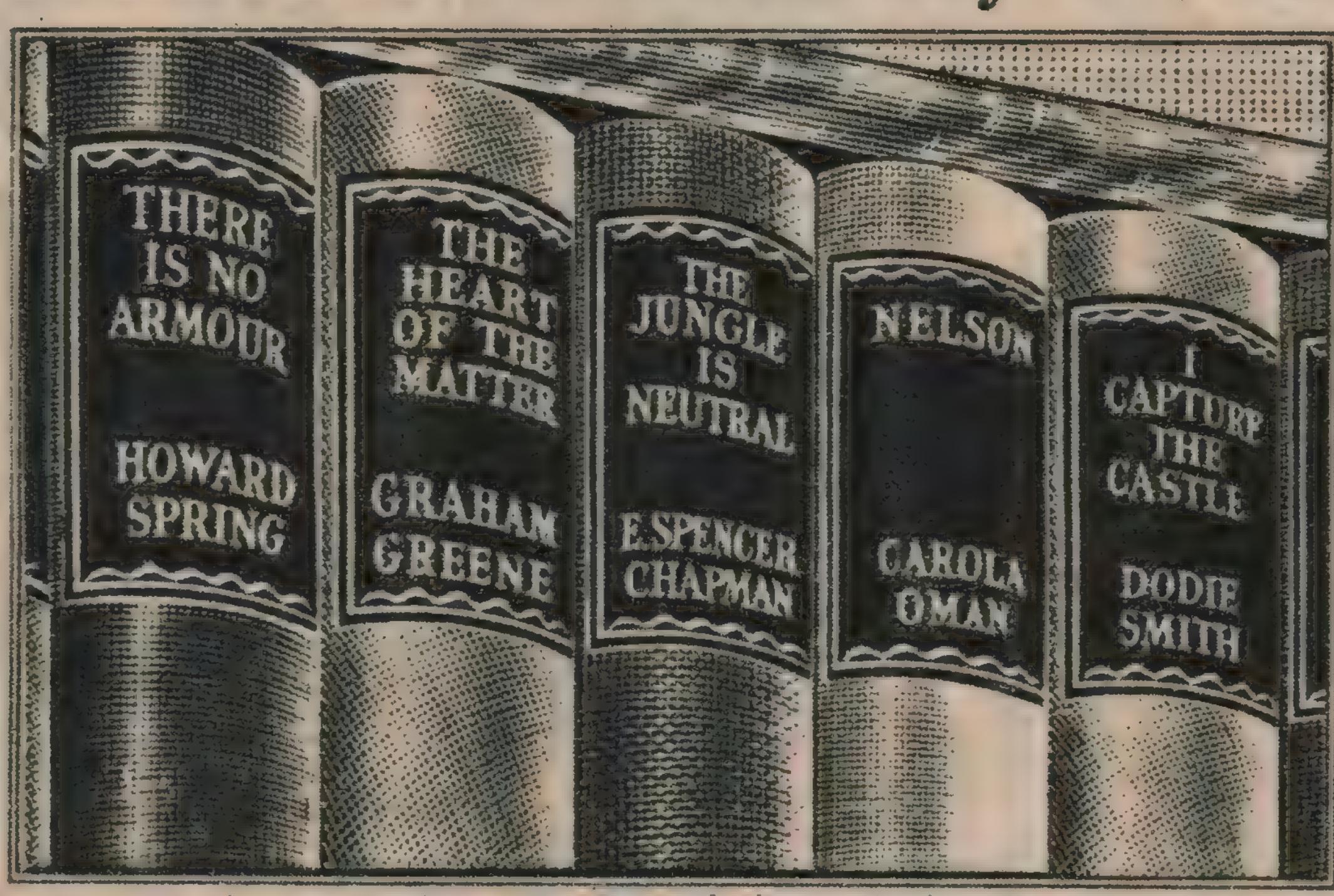

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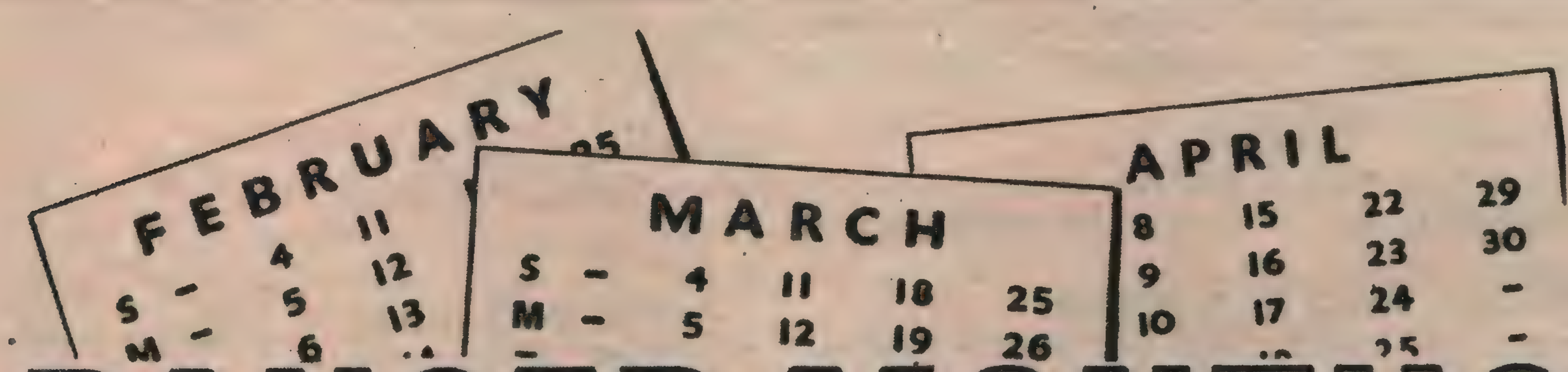

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staring and saying nothing, waiting for the other man to commit himself. He brought two small glasses of a watery mixture that he described as "a decent dry sherry," and as soon as they had emptied them he led the way into a very crowded dining-room with a scheme of decoration that suggested a cheap coffin. Here, over two tiny, sodden helpings of cottage pie and tumblers of mournful bitter beer, the Commodore met the pale inquiring gaze of his host and wished he was anywhere else.

"What sort of people use this club?" he asked desperately.

"People from our Ministry," said Daubenny Stevens, "and some B.B.C. people. You might say we're all engaged in one form or another of mass communications. Some documentary film people, too. Mass communications on an official level, you might say."

"Mass communications, eh?" said the Commodore. "But on an official level, as you say. Sort of thing your aunt was mentioning to me." He looked across for the tiniest signal, the merest token of help, of co-operation, of interest. Not a glimmer. "Yes, the sort of thing your aunt was mentioning to me." At every other table people were talking as though they had just been taken off a foundering liner. Communication was in full swing everywhere but at this table of theirs. "I saw her the other day," he continued, "and I happened to say that I was looking for something amusing to do—I was with *Mostly Foreign Affairs*, you know, but resigned—and she told me I ought to see you."

"Yes," said Daubenny Stevens.

"Very good of you to ask me to have lunch with you."

"Not at all. Apple charlotte or cheese?"

"Do you know," said the Commodore, calling up some of the last reserves, "I think I'll have cheese. What your aunt suggested," he added, "was that I ought to try some form of public service, of the kind that a lot of you seem to be in. She seemed to think there were openings, especially now with this Festival of Britain business. It was her idea, you know, not mine. I wouldn't know. Been abroad a lot. Out of touch, as she pointed out." He looked hopefully across the table, now groaning under two square inches of apple charlotte, a square inch of cheese and two biscuits.

"Quite," said Daubenny Stevens. "By the way, I'm not boring you, am I?"

"Irony?" There might have been a ghost of a smile trying to haunt that unpromising little mouth. Or perhaps the apple charlotte was too hot.

"Well, now," said the Commodore, feeling it was now or never, "I can easily imagine that an account of my difficulties isn't very interesting to you. And, if you don't mind my saying so, you aren't opening out very much, are you?"

"The trouble is, I have to see a lot of people," said Daubenny Stevens, "and as most of them talk too much, I've got into the habit of not being too encouraging and responsive."

"What do you do?" asked the Commodore, immensely responsive and encouraging.

"I was in Pamphlets, but at the moment I'm doing Home Lectures."

"What about this Festival of Britain business?"

"I think my aunt was misleading you there. Much too late now. I've nothing to do with the Festival, but I've made some inquiries, and we're joining a man for coffee who knows all about it."

"Good!" said the Commodore and meant it. "Might as well wait then, eh?"

"Yes. But I don't think there's much chance. I'm afraid my aunt talks a lot of nonsense about official jobs."

The Commodore grinned. "She thinks they're a bit of a racket. All this mass communicating on an official level—she wouldn't understand it. Neither do I, by the way. What's it all about, anyhow?"

There were distinct signs of life in Daubenny Stevens. "We have to educate and influence the mass of the people. Make them understand what's happening. We do it through documentary film, wireless features and talks, Press releases, mass publications, and lectures. And there's bound to be more and more of it, as time goes on, no matter what government we have. Government by consent in the modern world really implies a conditioned electorate."

"It does, does it?" said the Commodore, rather dubiously.

"The people you see here are all busy creating public opinion."

"Yes, well, no doubt that explains a good deal," said the Commodore, vaguely, giving a quick glance round at the creators of public opinion. "I'd just as soon they didn't myself, and there wasn't so much communicating and conditioning, but I dare say I'm prejudiced. Born too early perhaps."

"I shouldn't be surprised," said Daubenny Stevens with some severity. "Shall we move into the other room?"

IT was rather more comfortable than the dining-room, although it appeared to have been decorated by the same inexpensive undertaker. At a table in a corner the Commodore was introduced to a Mr. Bilst, a warm, pudgy chap, with an odd manner that was both jovial and furtive, as if he were an intellectual gangster.

"I must go," said Daubenny Stevens. "Bilst will explain about the Festival. I'm afraid there's nothing more I can do for you at present, Commodore Tribe. No, not at all. Goodbye!"

Left to themselves, the Commodore and Bilst relaxed.

"Now tell me about this Festival business," the Commodore said.

"It's not really my pigeon," said Bilst, "but I know about it, and pull a few strings in a quiet way. And if you'd come to me about a year ago, even six months ago perhaps, I might have arranged for you to have something. Perhaps as one of the provincial organizers, running a local festival season. But the festivities are due to begin in most places in about five or six weeks, which means, of course, that all the places that are running their own shows appointed their organizers months ago. Even if one of them changed its mind, which isn't likely, you can see that there simply isn't time to get yourself appointed and push on with the job now."

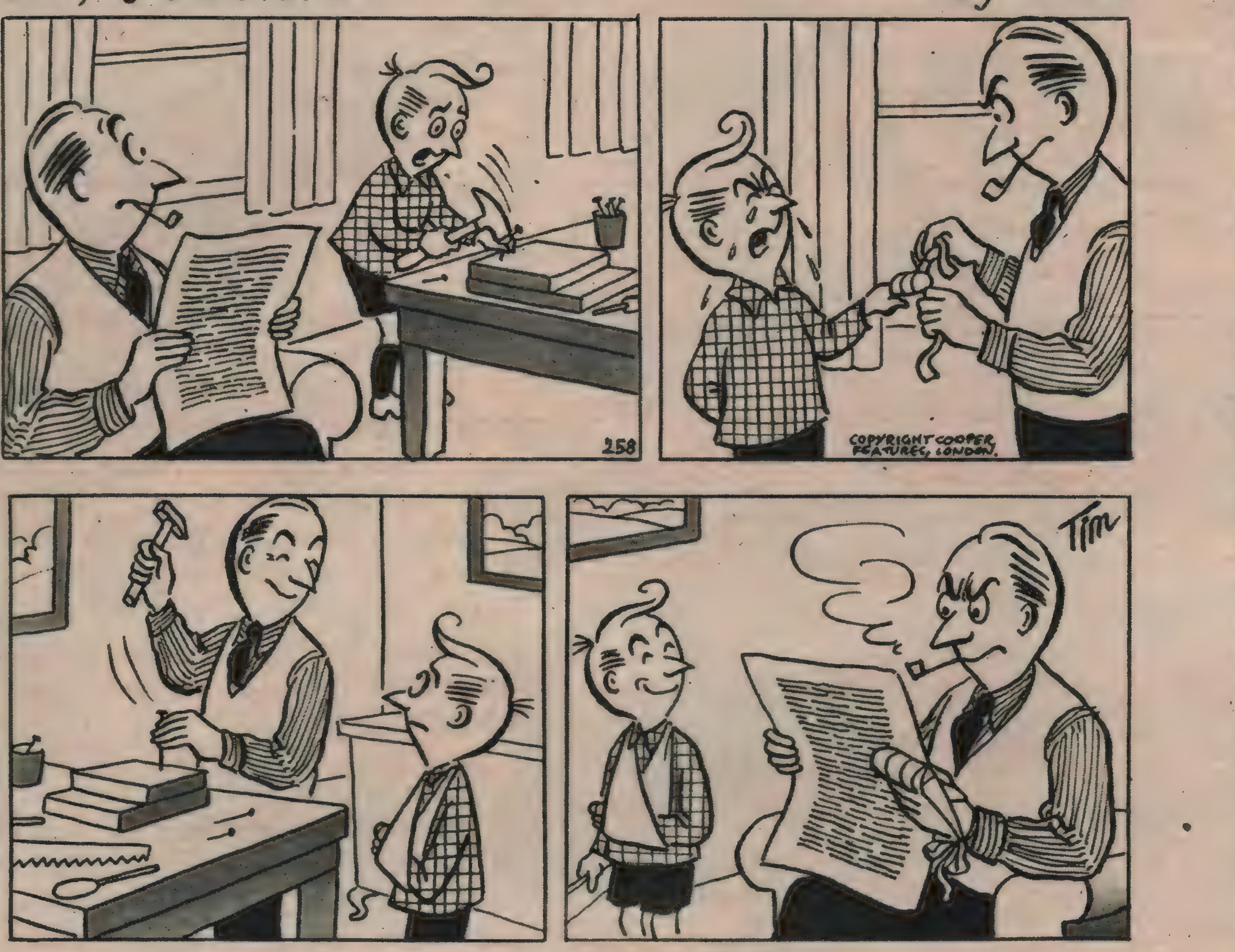
"As a matter of fact, my dear fellow, I can't see it. There's plenty of time if the right man sets about it. By the way, you don't happen to have a list of these towns with their own special organizers, do you?"

"I brought one along, after Stevens rang me this morning," said Bilst, and produced it. "Any particular place you want to know about?"

"The nearest town of any size to where I am at the moment," said

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM



the Commodore, "is Farbridge. Know anything about Farbridge and the Festival?"

Bilst consulted his documents. "It's one of the towns that refused to appoint an organizer or to make any plans for the Festival. Must be hard nuts there. Though it's no size, of course. About fifty thousand, I imagine." He looked up and grinned. "Thinking of asking 'em there to give you a last-minute appointment?"

"I have to see a man there in the morning about a possible job in his business," the Commodore replied, slowly. "But this Festival thing is just worth remembering. And if I did have a go at it, might I let you know, just to see if you could still pull one or two of those strings you mentioned?"

Bilst made a note. "Why not? Commodore Tribe, isn't it? And here's my address and telephone number. Let's finish this brandy, I'm due elsewhere."

ORIGINALLY, the Commodore had intended to take the afternoon train back to Tredberrow, but now, after that dismal miniature of a lunch and the depressing society of Daubenny Stevens, he felt he owed himself a good evening in the West End. This meant catching the very late train that reached Tredberrow in the small hours, and then a two-mile walk from the station, all at the end of a long day, too; but he could manage it. But he did not want to spend the evening alone; so now he looked for a telephone-box.

He rang up three old acquaintances. From the first there was no reply at all. He was told that the second man had gone abroad. The third call brought him worse news: "The Captain died just five weeks ago, sir—didn't you hear?" And suddenly he felt old and very tired, squashed into that smelly little box, with the traffic grinding and hooting past in a London that had grown strange and cold, full of mass communicators and empty of friends. The sour taste in his mouth seemed the unfamiliar flavour of defeat. But a tapping on the glass reminded him that this was no place in which to lose himself in self-pity.

"I beg your pardon, madam," he said, taking off his old black hat. "I heard some disturbing news, and didn't hear you at first, I imagine."

"It's quite all right," the woman said. "But do you think you could change two shillings. I lost my last two pennies in that stupid machine next door. There was nobody in, where I was ringing, and then I pressed the wrong thing—I always do."

"I think I've been pressing the wrong button all my life, madam," he told her. "But here are two pennies."

She gave him a look in which speculation was mixed with concern. She had good grey eyes in a pleasant middle-aged face, a face that seemed less experienced, more innocent, than the rather smart clothes she wore. Her accent, too, though she spoke briskly enough, had something provincial about it, perhaps even rustic, earthy. "Do put your hat on—you'll catch cold," she said. "I oughtn't to ask—a perfect stranger, too—but I could see something was wrong. Did you say it was bad news?"

"I rang up an old friend," he said slowly; and though he had been genuinely shocked he could not help dramatizing the situation now. "I was told he died five weeks ago."

She was all concern now, and made the *t-t-t-t* noise that most rather old-fashioned comfortable women like to make at these moments.

"I came up for the day," the Commodore continued, with a fine, tragic cadence, "and hoped to spend the evening with him. It was hard to realize that we'd already spent our last evening on earth together. And—well, I was beginning to feel sorry for myself in there—and kept you waiting, I'm afraid."

"I know just how you feel," she said, regarding him earnestly. "I had just the same experience only last week, just after I arrived here."

"Skews *me*!" cried a cheerful voice, and the owner of it, a young man in a hurry, dived between them into the call box. They looked at each other, prepared to be either annoyed or amused. Then they laughed.

"My name is Tribe, Commodore Tribe——"

"Oh, yes," and she nodded and smiled, as if recognizing that this was a sensible move of his.

"And I'd be much obliged," he continued, "if you'd overlook the informality of these proceedings, and take a cup of tea with me."

"Well, you know," she cried, in a rather excited but still quietly confidential way, "I don't see why I shouldn't, do you? In the circumstances—I mean, you hearing your friend has gone, and the very same thing happening to me only last week. I expect there's a teashop near here."

"Sure to be." There was, not three hundred yards away, all very cosy indeed, and there in a corner, with a pink-shaded little light between them, they ate toasted tea-cakes and drank three cups each, and never stopped talking. The Commodore did most of the talking, and was very much the seasoned traveller, to his listener's great content, for she was one of those untravelled but romantic souls who see the world as a box of delights and wonders. Nevertheless, he gave her plenty of opportunity to talk about herself, and the curious thing was that, apart from a few little reminiscences, which established that her name was Grace, she seemed deliberately to avoid giving him any definite information. She never mentioned her surname, where she had spent most of her life, what her circumstances were, what she was doing in London or even where she was staying. He laid little traps for her, but, naïve though she might be, she contrived to escape them. It was all the more curious and tantalizing because this reticence seemed completely out of character, for she was clearly an easy, friendly creature, not at all the type of woman who would pretend to be mysterious about herself for an obvious effect.

"Well," she said, regretfully, when it was clearly time to go, "this has been very nice."

"It's a pity we can't make an evening of it," he said. "Dine and go to a show."

"I have two tickets for one," she told him. "That's what I was going to ring up about. I'll be glad if you'll come with me, Commodore."

"Delighted! That is, if you'll dine with me first. You will? Good! Now, let me see. I'm rather out of touch. What's the show?"

She told him—it was a revue, and it started later than the straight plays—and then he named a restaurant, not too far away from the theatre, and they agreed to meet there at seven.

DINNER was a rather more intimate and riper version of tea. They were friends now, not afraid of a teasing remark or two, and sometimes they were content to exchange looks and smile companionably; but the general pattern of talk was as before, with the Commodore pulling delights and wonders out of the world's great box for her, while she still contrived to tell him nothing about herself.

"I shall have to call you Grace," he said, rather pointedly, "as I've nothing else to call you."

"Yes, well—that's all right." And, rosy though she was, she now had a heightened colour. "Call me Grace. It's my name."

At the theatre they both enjoyed the same funny bits, and enjoyed each other's enjoyment, too. It was very snug in this multi-coloured, glittering cave with the howling, dark world shut out and nearly forgotten. The interval arrived, and she smilingly refused a drink but begged him to go out for one. And when he returned, there she was, looking up eagerly from her programme, ready to welcome him back, as though they had known each other for years, and this was some anniversary. Nothing could have been pleasanter, and the Commodore began to see this as the first of many such evenings and wondered how to find some job that would make these evenings possible. And then it happened, as these things always happen; as though that almost forgotten howling, dark world outside had sent one of its tigers crashing through the paper wall of illusion.

The comedians of the revue were rollicking through the chief comic sketch of the second half. And nobody there was laughing louder than the Commodore, who, in a final spasm, was conscious of nothing but his own coughing and choking and agony of merriment. Then, coming out of it, he turned to Grace to apologize. She was not there, but he was not alarmed and waited easily for her return. When the show went on and on, and began to draw to its close, and she had not come back, he concluded that she probably did not want to disturb the other people along the row and was content to stand somewhere behind. But when the show was over, he could not see her anywhere. He waited in the foyer but she did not appear.

Finally, he asked the attendant if he remembered seeing her. "That's right, sir," the man said, "Lady in blue, wasn't it—left about the middle of the second half? I remember 'cos I got a taxi for her. No, she didn't leave no message."

It was like a sinister fairy tale. After all that sudden friendliness, those soft and warming glances, those smiles and dimples, the wonder and the admiration and the teasing, she had vanished as unexpectedly as she had arrived, an unknown woman tapping at a callbox; vanished into the huge stone wilderness and mystery of London, leaving behind, so far as he could remember, not a single clue to her identity.

ALL the way to Tredberrow Junction and then along the two-mile drudge to The Bell, he examined and questioned the mournful riddle; and now the lost Grace was no longer a pleasant little provincial woman, mere company for an evening that promised nothing, but, he came to persuade himself, the last and best woman in his life. And if she had been a dead matchstick he had flicked away anywhere between Welbeck Street and Leicester Square, she could not be more irretrievably lost, more hopelessly gone.

There was no night porter at The Bell, but the old waiter, Walter, sometimes sat up for a latecomer. The Commodore found the back door unlocked, and then found Walter, looking like one of Rembrandt's old men, snoring under one dim bulb in the kitchen. And at once he felt in his bones that something was wrong. He was careful to waken the old man very gently.

"Everything all right, Walter?" he whispered.

"Not by a long chalk, Commodore," said Walter, softly, shaking his head. "Read this. She asked me specially to sit up to give it to you. And it's my guess, sir, you won't like it."

Lucy York had written: *Frank is back, very suspicious and difficult, and I am dreadfully worried. He mustn't meet you, so if you do decide to stay tonight you must leave very early in the morning. I've told Gladys to waken you at six in case you do stay, but do be careful!*

"Walter," he said softly, "I'm leaving early in the morning. I'll go to Farbridge—I have to see a man there anyhow. Not possible to arrange transport now, so I'll take one small bag and leave the other two to be sent on, when I know where I'm staying. Keep an eye on them for me, will you, Walter? Here's a pound note. I wish it was

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more, but the fact is I doubt if I've enough left to pay my bill here and God knows where the next cheque's coming from—it's like that."

The weary old face crinkled into a sly grin. Without saying very much, Walter and the Commodore had always understood each other. "Wouldn't worry about the bill here, sir. Have an idea not much'll be said about that."

"You may be right, Walter. Well!" The Commodore rose, yawning. "Good luck, Walter! You've been a friend."

"And the same to you, sir, the very same to you."

And they shook hands, one frail and one bulky figure under that dim bulb in the great shadowy kitchen.

THE Commodore had learned that the White Hart was the best hotel in Farbridge—for those who could afford it—and there he went. He had made it a rule always to stay at the best possible hotel, whatever his curcumstances might be. A good address, he argued, helped a man to make money; and if there was no money to be made, then you might as well owe a large bill to a good hotel as owe a smaller one to a bad hotel.

Indeed, it was easier to live on credit at the more superior establishments. He had known in his time some men who could only afford to stay at the most expensive hotels in London, Paris and New York.

He had just time to deposit his bag in his room and have a wash before going to keep his appointment with Colonel Whatmore. The artificial silk factory, which was on the outskirts of the town, covered a good deal of ground and suggested a large and prosperous enterprise. The offices occupied a central block, five storeys high; and there the Commodore gave his name to a young woman at the inquiries counter and told her he had an appointment with Colonel Whatmore.

After a few minutes the young woman returned, looking rather flustered, and said the Colonel wanted to know what his business was. The Commodore then found the card Colonel Whatmore had given him on Saturday night, scribbled a few words on it, and handed it over to the young woman.

After another wait, she came back, looking downright miserable now, and conducted him along a corridor and into a small office, to confront a woman who might have been the principal of a women's college. She refused to return his smile, and appeared to regard him as a suspicious character.

The Commodore, who began to feel that he was a long way from the hearty goodfellowship of Saturday night, waited for this severe woman to announce him. A large electric clock and a number of little signalling lamps, flashing on and off, did nothing to reassure him.

The man sitting behind the wide desk bore a close physical resemblance to the Colonel Whatmore who had kept an eye on him and taken such a fancy to him on Saturday night. There was the same stiff, old-school military carriage, the same red face and bristly grey moustache, and more or less the same bloodshot eyes. But it was painfully clear at once that this was not a golfer who had been dined and wined generously, but the chairman of Whatmore and Company, Limited.

"I think there's some mistake—er—Commodore—er—Tribe." said Colonel Whatmore after a pause, without asking his visitor to sit down.

"Is there? You asked me to call here, you know," said the Commodore, sitting down without being asked. "It was your idea."

The Colonel looked annoyed and then cleared his throat very sharply, as if that might help. "I don't think so."

The Commodore looked hard at him. "I do. Otherwise I wouldn't be here, you know. You suggested there might be something I could do here—public relations or personnel management."

"We're not thinking of making any changes in our present staff," said the Colonel, grasping at this familiar phrase with some relief.

If the man had admitted he had been tight on Saturday and had probably made all manner of ridiculous promises he could not possibly keep when sober, all would have been well; and the Commodore would have forgiven him at once. It was this attempt to bluff it out and put him in the wrong that made him angry.

"You said—and I've quite a clear recollection of it, even if you haven't—you said that you'd been keeping your eye on me, that you prided yourself on making quick decisions—about a Major Bulfoss, for instance—and had taken such a fancy to me that I had to come here and see you as soon as possible. Which," the Commodore added, "was this morning."

"Well, I'm sorry you've had this journey for nothing," said the Colonel, very red now and looking along his desk. "And I can only repeat that there's been some mistake and that we're not thinking of making any changes in our present staff. And that's all, I think." He rang a bell, and tried to pretend that he was now alone in his office.

"No, not quite all," said the Commodore, as he stood up. He turned to see that the severe secretary had now come in and was looking inquiringly at the Colonel.

"Yes, I want you, Miss Moseley," said the Colonel, still pretending that the Commodore had vanished.

"Yes, Colonel Whatmore." She was helping him with his pretence.

"It's obvious now," said the Commodore, in a loud, clear voice, "that you were even tighter, more pickled, plastered and bottled, on Saturday night at Tredberrow than I thought you were. You didn't look too bad outside, being one of these stiff, shut-in types, but I see now that inside you must have been mere mush and slosh. All right, if you can't hold your liquor, then you can't."

COLONEL WHATMORE, furious, pushed himself up from the desk, and began shouting: "If there's any more of this——"

"There isn't much more," and the Commodore easily shouted him down. "I'm not blaming you for Saturday, when you were only a conceited donkey who'd had three or four whiskies too many. But this morning's performance is just a piece of insufferable, wooden-headed, damnably stupid masquerading that's an insult both to my intelligence and to any sense and good manners you may have ever possessed. And if I ever have the bad luck to meet you again, just look out, Whatmore, because I'll do my best to make you look the pompous ass you are, drunk or sober. And that's a promise, a real one, not like yours. Good morning." And he clapped his hat on the back of his head, thrust his hands deep into the pockets of his voluminous old green overcoat, and strode out of the office

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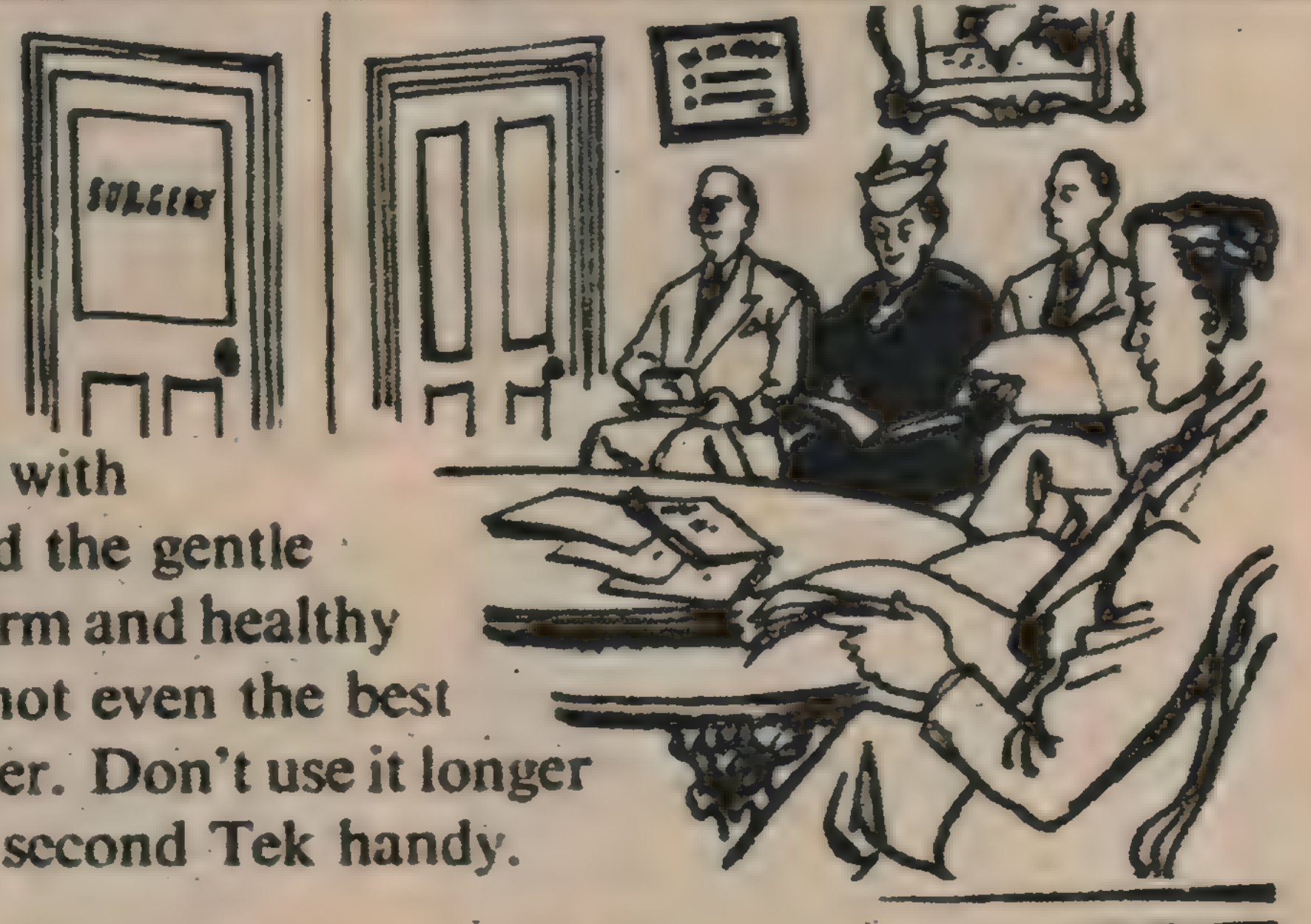

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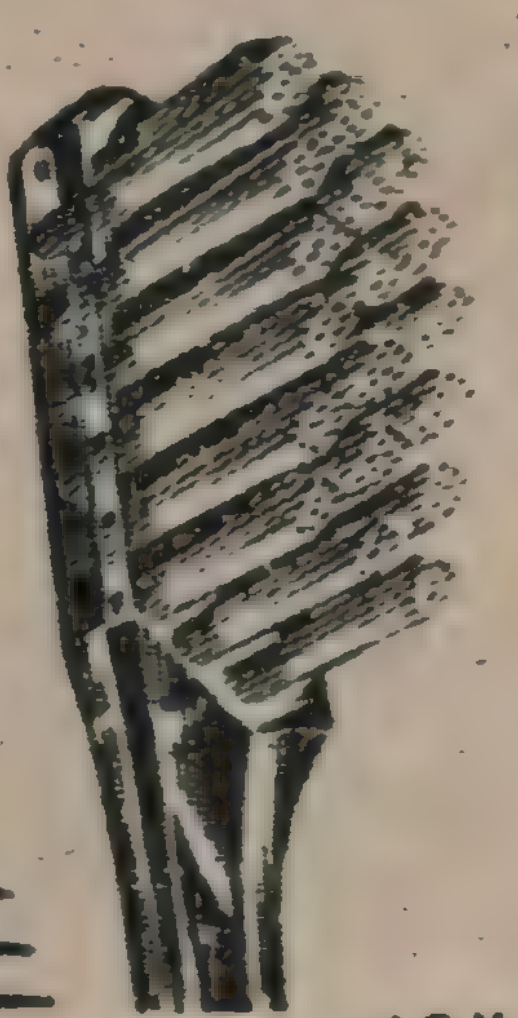

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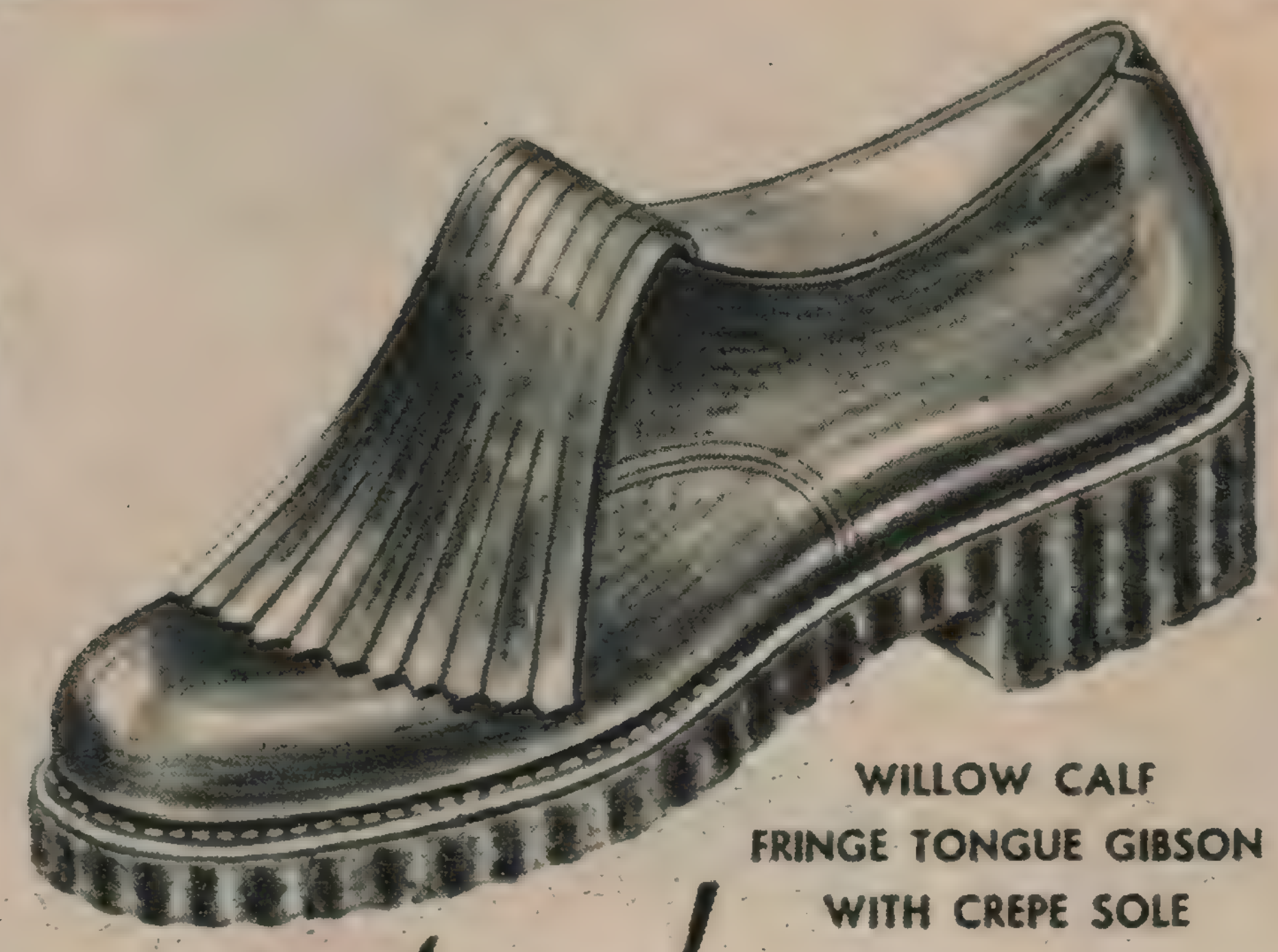

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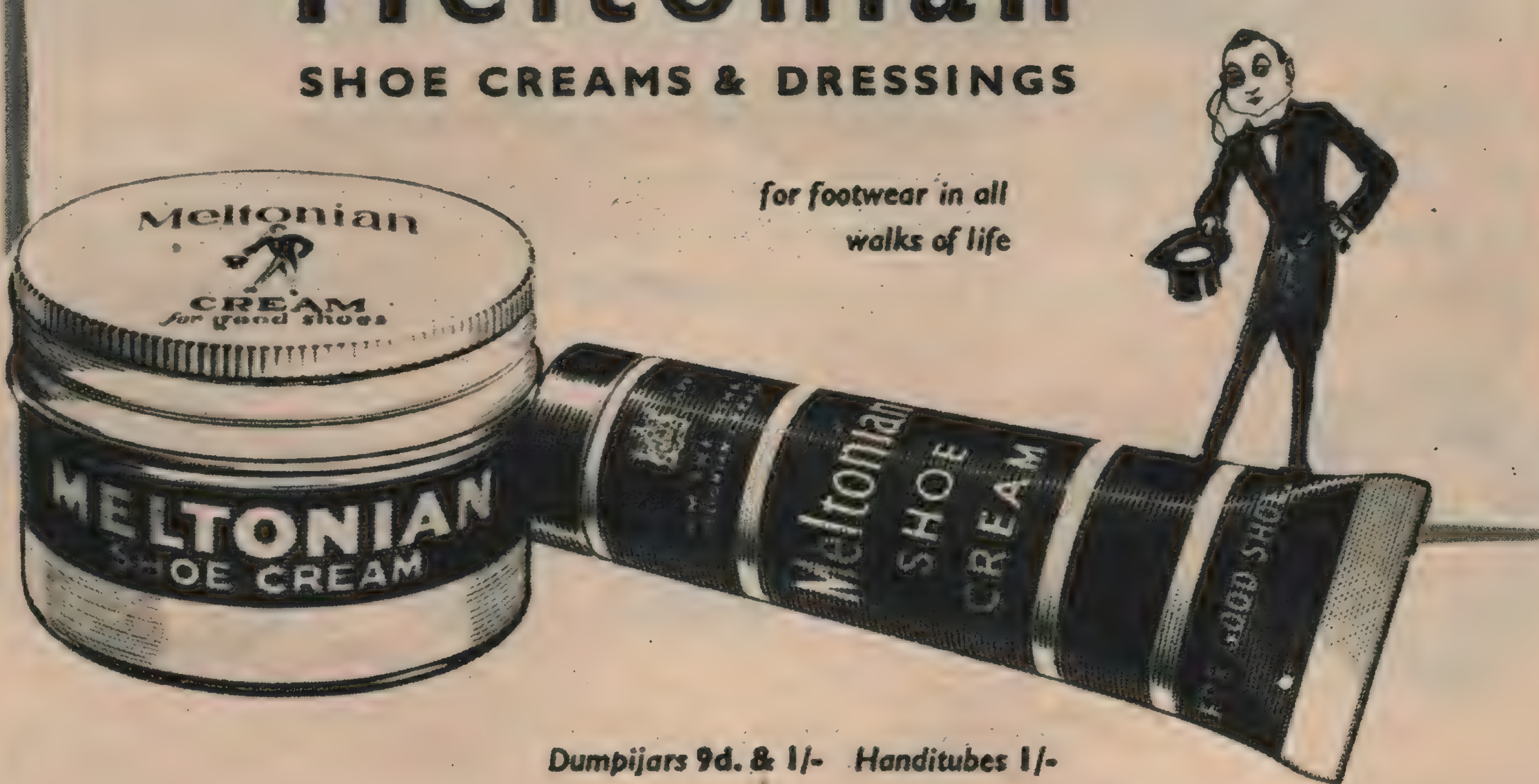

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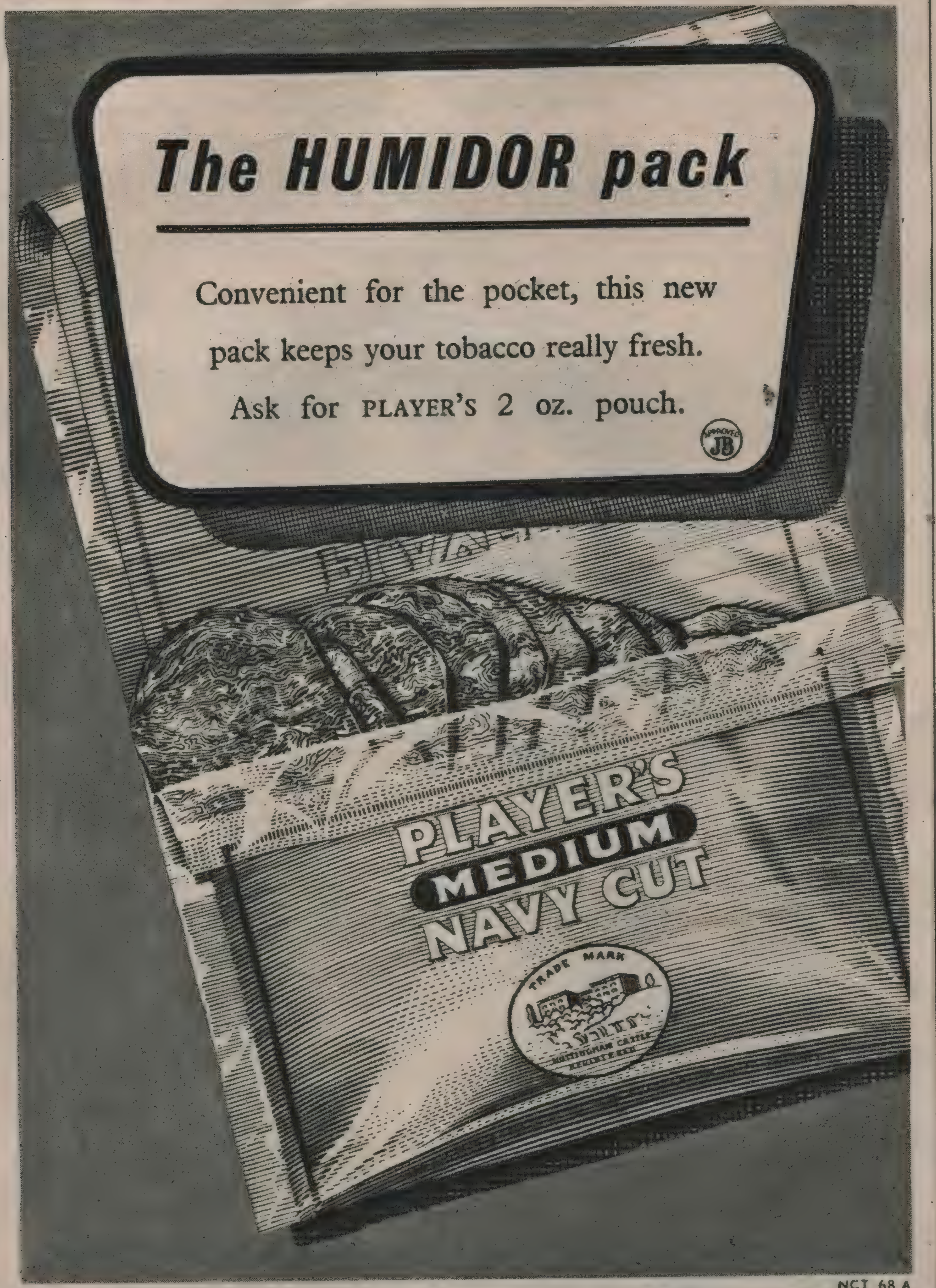

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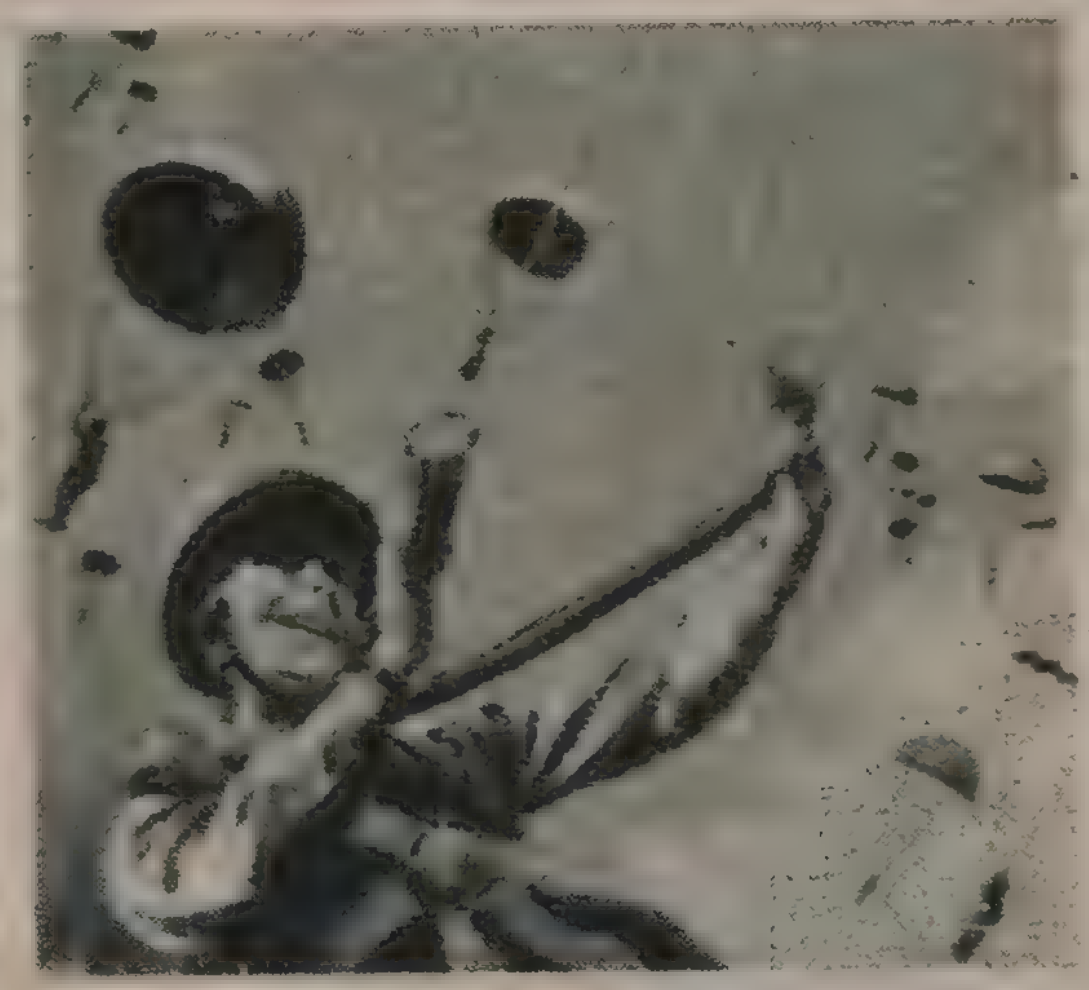

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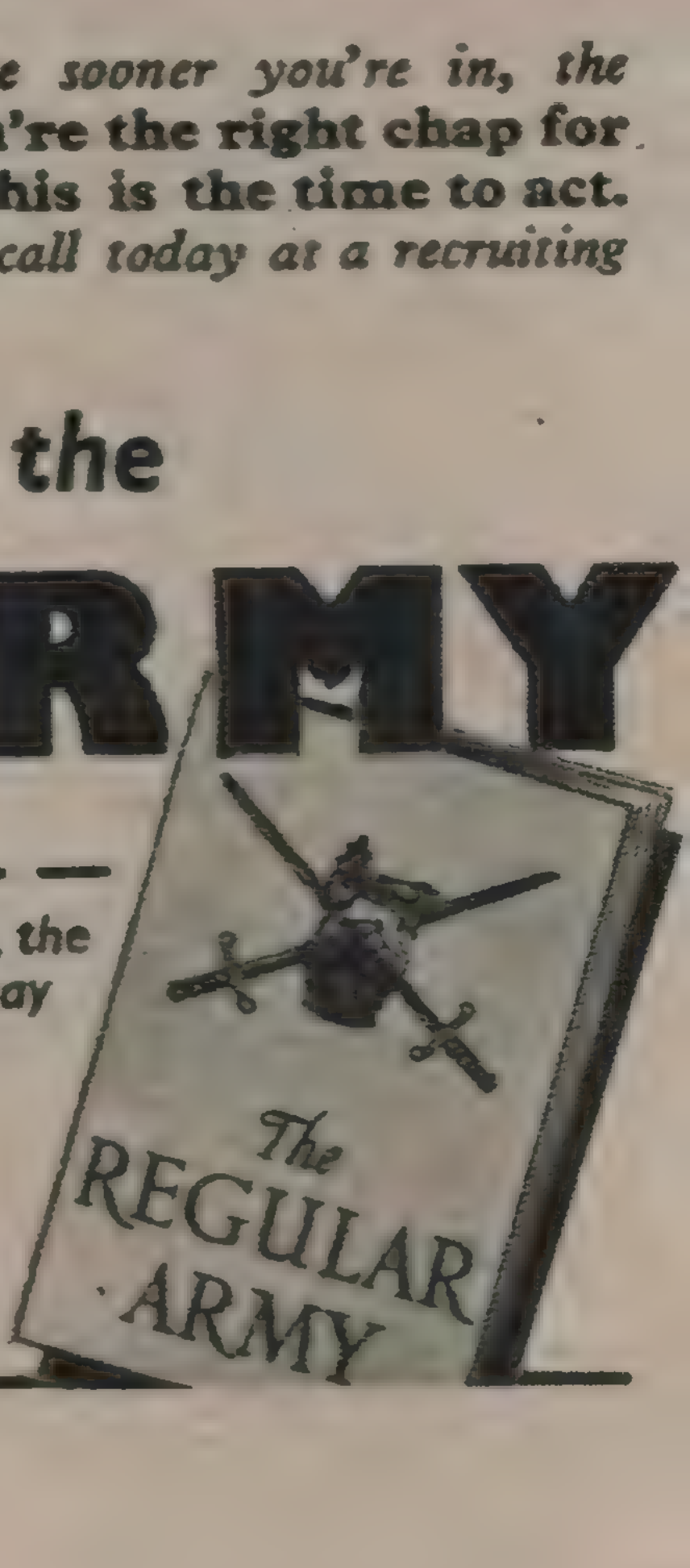

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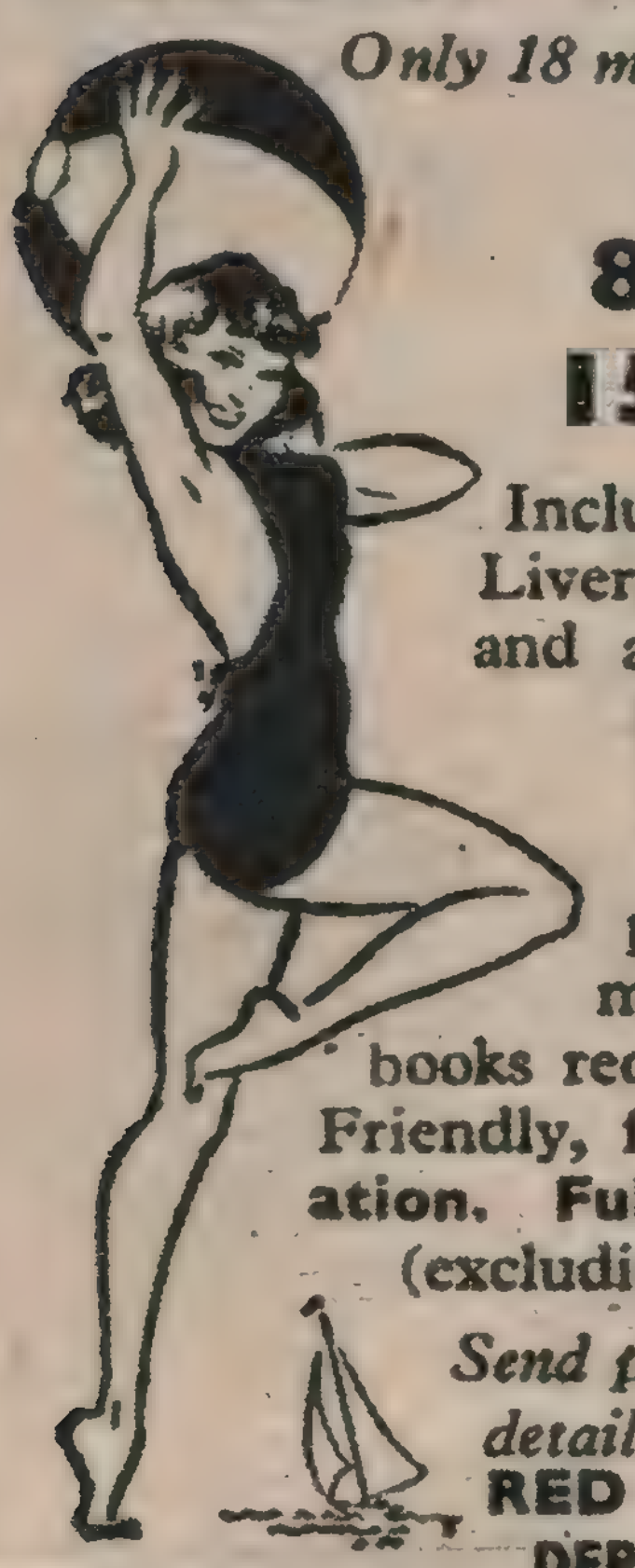

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were borne in upon him. "Australia!" he bawled at the top of his voice. "*Australia!*" He lunged below.

In the cabin, he sat staring at the chart and rumpling the curly, yellow hair round his bald spot. Underlying the voices, whispering, sullen and resentful in his mind, was that blind drive to press on, press on at all costs. But he knew that, if he pressed on for Perth, he and the stowaway would both inevitably starve before they got there.

He took a pull at his rum and scowled at the chart. As far to the south of his present position as Port Elizabeth was astern of it, lay a group of inhabited islands. To shape a course for them, to land the stowaway, almost certainly would lose him the season for a fast passage to Perth. If he changed course now, lost his chance, he'd never make Australia. He felt it in his bones. He'd lose Margaret Rhodes. And for what? For a dockside rat of a stowaway!

He sat staring at the chart. Dead ahead of the *Sheba's* marked position was a single speck of land with the name printed in tiny italics: *Barrel Island.* Last night he had dreamed about Barrel Island—the "Dead Letter Rock" of the whalers.

The wind-wrinkles twitched oddly about Matt's eyes. He reached for the mug. He stared at that speck on the chart, but he was thinking of Margaret. "Skipper," she always called him. She was an Australian, not much younger than himself. He had met her at the Evenhoe Yacht Club when she had been in England on a visit.

The queer thing was, he hadn't realized at the time that it was a romance—the only romance of his life. Even when she had said, at parting: "You know, Skipper, you need someone to look after you. Ever think of settling in Australia?"—even then, feeling the firm, friendly grip of her hand, he hadn't realized the truth. It had taken him a year of loneliness, of mumbling and bumbling, of missing her, of longing for her companionship, her easy capability, to bring home to him the bewildering fact that, quite simply, he couldn't face the future without her. It just wasn't worth while.

So he had written and told her he was sailing the *Sheba* to Australia—that was all. "I'm coming," he had said, and he had to get there, and nothing would stop him—nothing.

He clasped his head in his huge hands, groaning, rumpling the hair round his bald spot, the small veins in his nose inflamed. He heard the faint thud of footfalls on deck. He lowered his hands, sat with his head cocked, listening. It was the stowaway moving about. He rumpled his beard. He slid the parallel ruler across the chart to Barrel Island.

Beyond the *Sheba's* tossing, pointing bowsprit, the sea tilted and glittered, and sudden leaps of spray flashed white up the nearing rock walls.

"See, Marco?" said Matt, at the wheel. "That kind of axe-head opening? That's Barrel Bay. Good anchorage and a bit of beach there."

"Lonely," said Marco. "Very lonely."

For three days the stowaway had been eating all he could hold. It wasn't just food. It was Matt's hopes of a fast passage, his very last chance of Margaret. . . .

"Lonely?" said Matt. "Why, that old rock's the metropolis of these waters. That's where the whalers post their last letters home—in a tarred barrel, up there out of reach of the highest seas. Never a whaler sails these waters but puts in at Dead Letter Rock to leave letters or clear 'em."

He didn't add that the whalers passed at yearly intervals.

When they had got the dinghy ashore, Matt handed Marco a sack, and Marco took it without hesitation, slinging it over his shoulder.

Matt pointed. "Up there," he said, "up the cliff there. You climb up that kind of fault in the rock. You'll find lumps of dried pitch lying about under the guano. I remember that pitch from thirty years ago, when I was your age, good at climbing—like you, eh? All right, Marco, you go and get a sack of pitch-lumps and we'll get those sprung seams caulked."

LIVING LANGUAGE

by George Beardmore

Why do we say "beat a tattoo"? The Army has the answer; it was once the Army's way of announcing "Time, gentlemen, please."

"Tattoo" is a corruption of "tap-to"—a signal on the drum that the *taps* of the public houses must be put *to*, or shut, and the soldiers return to barracks.

Besides being a nightly signal for a return to quarters, a tattoo today is also a military display by night. It has no connection with a "tattoo" on the skin. That comes from the Tahitian word *tatau.*

"Pitch, *Capitán.* I get it," Marco said. "I get it."

Matt stood, bulky in his sweater, watching the boy climbing. He would be out of sight soon. It would take Matt only a few minutes to row back to the *Sheba*.

Matt watched the boy's agile retreating back with a queer mixture of emotions. If he told the boy to jump off the top of the cliff, he would probably do so. There was something wholly trusting and animal about the stowaway. It was like having a puppy on the boat. How could a puppy know he was eating up vital supplies? How could he know what the food meant in terms of getting to Australia and Margaret?

"Not like this," Matt said suddenly. He was not, for a moment, aware whether he had actually spoken, or whether the words were in his head. He said them again: "Not like this." He began to shout to the boy. "Marco! Marco!"

The small figure turned. "Yes, *Capitán*? Yes?"

"No pitch," Matt shouted. "Never mind that. You come back. We've got to get going. Weather," he ended vaguely.

"I come," the boy said. He was disappointed. He was enjoying himself. "I come, *Capitán*."

The weather was perfect. The *Sheba* went on logging better than a hundred miles a day. Every day was a day nearer certain starvation for them both. Either Matt must change course south to the group of inhabited islands while there still was time, or the boy must go. Yet he found it hard to pump up the berserk rage which would enable him to do what had to be done—and done soon.

Matt sat in the cabin, drinking. The voices were nagging in his head, whispering, mocking, tugging him this way, that way. Exhausted by rum and irresolution and muddle, he must have dozed. For the next thing he knew was a jerk so violent that it hurled him sprawling on hands and knees.

The cabin was pitch dark. The deck soared and plunged and tilted under him, banging him about dazedly. The uproar that bludgeoned him was the tumult of wind and sea. He dragged himself to his feet, only to be nearly thrown again by a solid gush of water down the companion.

He held on, the water seething round his hips, till the cant of the deck took him up the companion with a rush, out into the cockpit. Here the wind staggered him. The cockpit was awash. Rags of the split mainsail streamed wildly, with reports liks shots. He cannoned into the wheel. He felt the boy there, clinging to it, and the touch kindled Matt's fury. Marco had been on watch, yet hadn't called him, hadn't seen the dark veils of the squall racing across the sea. He might have had the mast out of her, might have done for the pair of them.

The red haze floated again before Matt's eyes. Bellowing, he got a bear hug on the boy, half lifting him, intent to pitch him over the side, as he should have done that very first day. The wheel span crazily. The deck bucked like a horse, throwing them both hard against the coaming, breaking Matt's grip, sending the pair of them to their knees.

The boy was screaming something. "No kill, *Capitán*. No kill. You kill—you hang! Letter in barrel . . . letter. . . ."

The words stabbed through Matt's rage. On hands and knees, beard and hair streaming, he peered at the boy, who, on all fours, was scrambling frantically back from him.

"Dead Letter Rock," the boy screamed. "In barrel—I leave letter in barrel——"

Matt clutched him by the slack of his shirt, heaving him close.

"You crazy," Marco panted. "From first, you mean kill. You say nobody know stowaway aboard. But I find barrel on Dead Letter Rock. I put letter in. I say I stowaway in *Sheba*, *Capitán* Cass, and he mean kill. One day ship come, find letter. One day someone ask about stowaway. You kill me, 'ow you answer, *Capitán*? 'Ow you answer?"

Matt held the boy close, peering at the streaming, olive-skinned face.

"You no kill, *Capitán*," said Marco. "Is better."

Matt thrust the boy violently from him. He reeled to his feet. He saw a black wall of water, edged with the hissing spume, rear high astern, racing down on the boat, threatening to poop them. He plunged for the spinning spokes of the wheel.

The *Sheba*, with spare mainsail bent, was bound south for the group of islands. Matt still had his stowaway, and the stowaway had won. It was now nine days since Matt had accepted the inevitable, abandoned his bid for Perth, changed course.

That day, they spoke a storeship, bound for the island community; and two days later they sighted the largest of the islands. It was mid-afternoon, the weather calm and cold and bright. There was a launch coming out to meet them.

A megaphoned voice asked if they

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TWO minutes from the time he looked at one of the *Examples*, forty-eight year old reader A. Morrison (31 Neale Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy) had completed his telling *Bullet*: FROM BRITAIN—COMMUNISM CANNOT "TAKE HEART."

A few words as neatly chosen as winner Morrison's, words which *you* might well think of in the next ten minutes, can bring you the First or any other of the rewards for good *Bullets* in this week's big new "Pick-Your-Prize" Offer. See the fine presentations which are waiting for winners to choose from—and, with 2,070 prize reasons to encourage you, start now on some *Bullets* for your coupon below!

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A fine roasting fowl accompanies each of the 20 chief prizes won with *Bullet* which was one of four or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in *Bulletin* and *Gazette*, dated April 21, and in JOHN BULL, dated April 28, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

RIVIERA HOLIDAYS
for "Bullets" next week!

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

The British Workman
Prosperity's Cup
Everybody's Asking
Dentist Gaitskell
Vital
Not At The Festival
A Godsend
Desperate Man
I Like Gardening, But
Old Campaigner
Picture Of Innocence
Unhonoured And Unsung
Dad's Hen
Busy Little Woman
Slimming
For A Few Days
Down Lovers' Lane
Like A Rainbow
Out Of Politeness
On The Morning Train

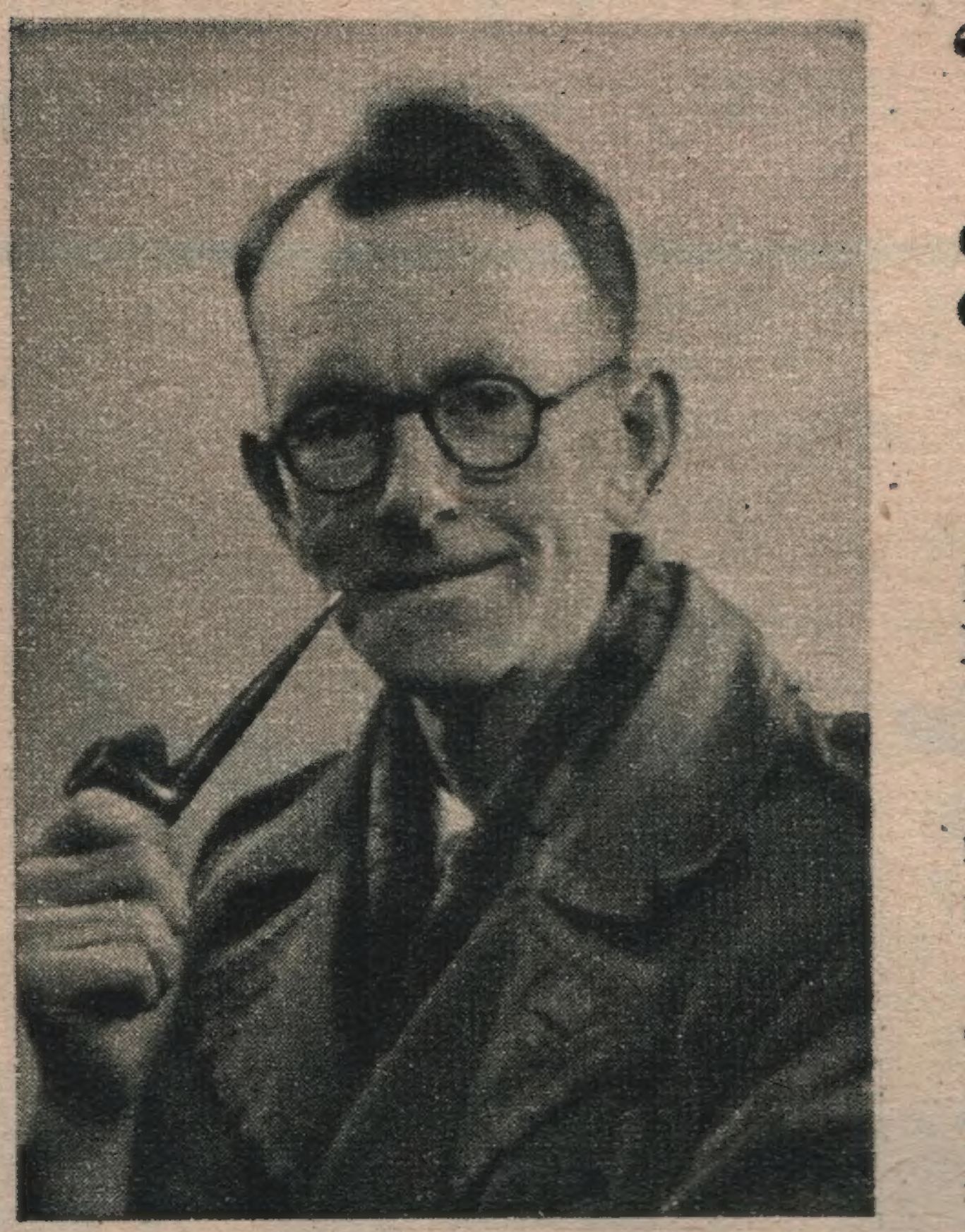
Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

Could Do With A..................
In Someone's........................
Envy Of The..........................
Can't Help............................
Buckets Of............................
The............Broke Down And

NOTE.—You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in same envelope covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "Combined," top left-hand corner.

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,776 (or Xword 728), "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)



"No competitor should be without the wonderful help of the 'teachers' in 'Bullets' Bulletin," declared £500 plus TV winner Mr. A. Morrison. Use the Application Form below and that practical help can be yours by post every Thursday

"Bullets" Winners 1,771

FIRST PRIZE, £500: E. Coates, 45 Victoria Street, Clitheroe, Lancs:

IN THE DUSTBIN PAPER? "PACK IT UP"!

£50: F. Dickman, 33 Ashdale, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire: IF STALIN SPEAKS—EVEN RUSSIAN *Women* LISTEN!

£25: R. A. Hawkey, Udimore, near Rye, Sussex: SEEING SUNBEAMS PLAY—ON ROADS, I *Shiver*.

OTHER AWARDS: £10: W. Best, c/o 1 Church Close, Wicken, Bucks: NEARLY REACHED IT—THEN "*Peak*" STARTED CLIMBING! £9: C. E. White, 243 Pentonville Road, London, N.1: IF STALIN LOWERED—"DRAWBRIDGE," EVERYONE'S "CASTLE" SAFER. £8: J. W. Booth, 138 Brookhill Street, Stapleford, Notts: IF STALIN STICKS—TO "STICK"—END, "STICKY." £7: A. B. Clare, 20 Kirkmoor Road, Clitheroe, Lancs: I WANT A TONIC, BUT—FORTUNE'S A DEAF "BARMAID"! £6: Mrs. H. Dryburgh, 27 Comely Bank Street, Edinburgh: IF STALIN MELTED—PROBABLY *Waxworks* ON FIRE! £5: W. J. Millar, 26 Larne Street, Ballymena, N. Ireland: BIT OF A COMMUNIST—NAZI, DEMOCRAT, WEATHERCOCK—FRITZ! £5: C. C. Smith, 12 Draycote Crescent, Darling-

Continued in previous column

Continued from next column

ton: GAMEKEEPER GRANDPA—RETIRED—POACHES *Honestly*, NOW!

(Above winners each also receive Easter Duck and Surprise Gift.)

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FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one, two or three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues **XWORD 728**

1. Coarse one may well tickle you
2. You can't object to one singing cheerfully
5. You should always be careful to avoid this
8. A waiter is better if he has
9. Can be expected to pluck and stuff a pigeon
11. One is now and again spoken of very highly in the Press
13. Good stuffing will make this last longer
14. Highlander in kilts will cause English schoolboys to do this

Down Clues

2. Almost anyone may get run down by
3. Chair is often difficult to
4. Gardener may find these spattered with mud in wet weather
6. Knowing how to do one can get you out of a tight corner
7. One can't admire men who drink to excess, not caring a button about
10. A boxer's this may well create a favourable impression
12. Is worse than useless if can't be made to work

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In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.). Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.) and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated April 14

* Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.

■	1	E	S	T	■	2 C	H	A	
3	■	N	O	R	■	A	I	L	■
U	4 C	■	■	E	A	R	■	I	■
5 S	L	I		E	■		■	B	6 S
T	O	E	■	■	7	■	8	I	P
■		■	9	O	O	K	■	■	
10 G	H	■	■	■	S	O	W	■	I
11 R	E		O	R	T	■	E	12 L	N
I	S	■	N	O	■	13	E	A	T
	■	14	E	E	R	728	■		■

CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
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(*Total fee shown includes entry on Square*)

Puzzle and Form strictly copyright **728** Closing Postmark Monday, April 2

I enclose P.O. value...... No..................
Signed..
Address..
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were all right, then boomed: "I'm coming alongside. I have a radiogram for you."

Standing at the wheel, after the launch had left them, Matt tore open the envelope. Evidently the storeship had radioed the *Sheba's* position, for he read:

> "Much interest your voyage here. Your position just reported in Sydney papers. Have been deeply worried about you. Beg you for my sake abandon voyage and take regular passage. Remember we aren't so young as we were, Skipper. Margaret."

IT seemed to Matt Cass, reading the message over and over, that he could feel her firm, friendly grip on his hand. "Plenty of time, Skipper—plenty of time."

He saw Marco watching him. With incredulity, it came to him that he had tried three times to murder Marco. He had tried to choke him, tried to maroon him, tried to throw him overboard. But Marco wouldn't be killed. He was a smart boy. All he had had, against Matt's great strength, Matt's madness, was his brains. He had used them. He had saved not only himself. He had saved Matt, too, for Matt knew now that he could never have gone to Margaret with blood on his hands. . . .

A gull mewed overhead. The sound brought back to Matt a vivid picture of Dead Letter Rock, the barrel on the cliff, and the letter in the barrel—the letter which had saved Marco from death, and himself, Matt Cass, from murder. He drew in his breath.

"Marco," he said, "we've got to think about how to get you home to Beira. I'll not report you as a stowaway. That might make complications for you ashore."

"*Si, Capitán?*" said Marco, with his quick, eager smile.

"Take the wheel," said Matt.

Going below, he made in the log certain judicious entries. Then he went back on deck.

"No need to say anything about stowing away," said Matt. "You're crew, see? Just to have things shipshape—here, sign here."

He took the wheel, and Marco took the pen, the crusted bottle of ink, the paper. He spread the paper on the locker, dipped the pen in the bottle, hesitated.

"Go ahead," said Matt. "It's for your own sake."

A slow wave of red darkened Marco's olive skin. He glanced shoreward. The houses were visible now, small and white; he was safe enough now.

"*Si, si, Capitán,*" said Marco.

Painstakingly, his tongue protruding from a corner of his mouth, he put, in the place for his signature, a large black X—his mark. He was a smart boy, Marco—but he never had learned to read or write. THE END

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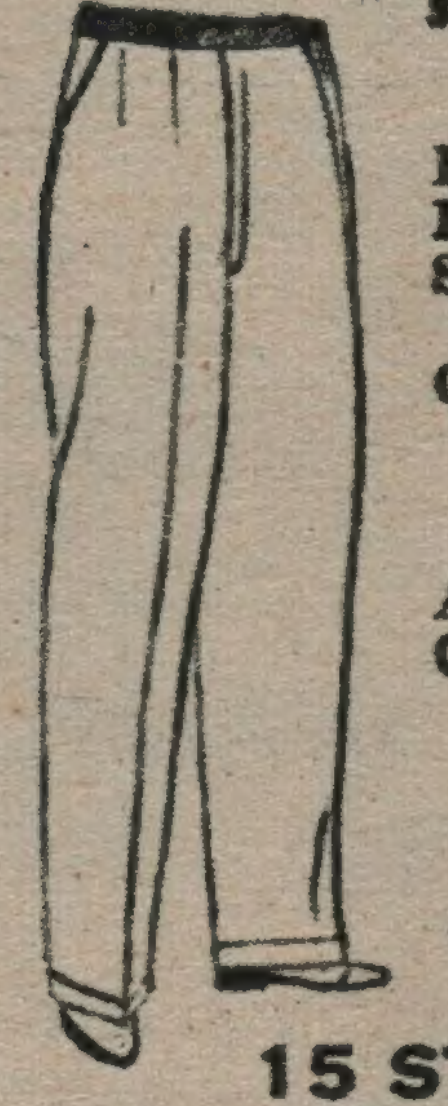

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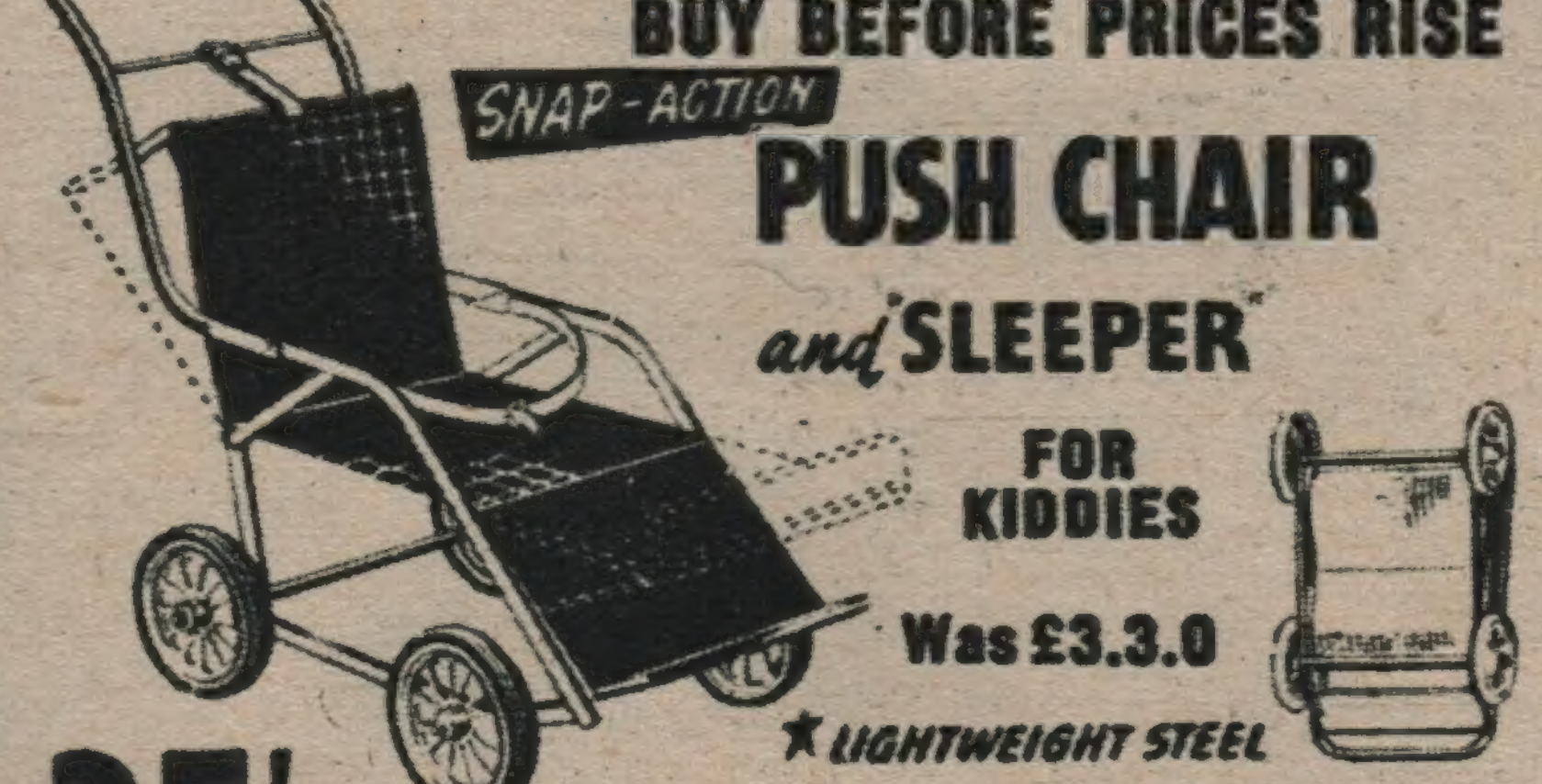

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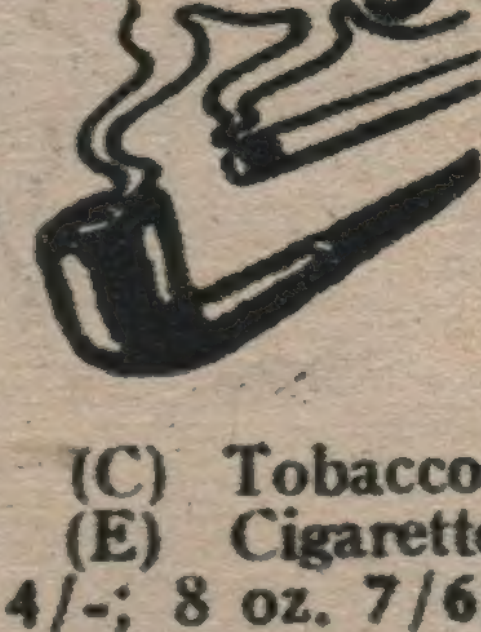

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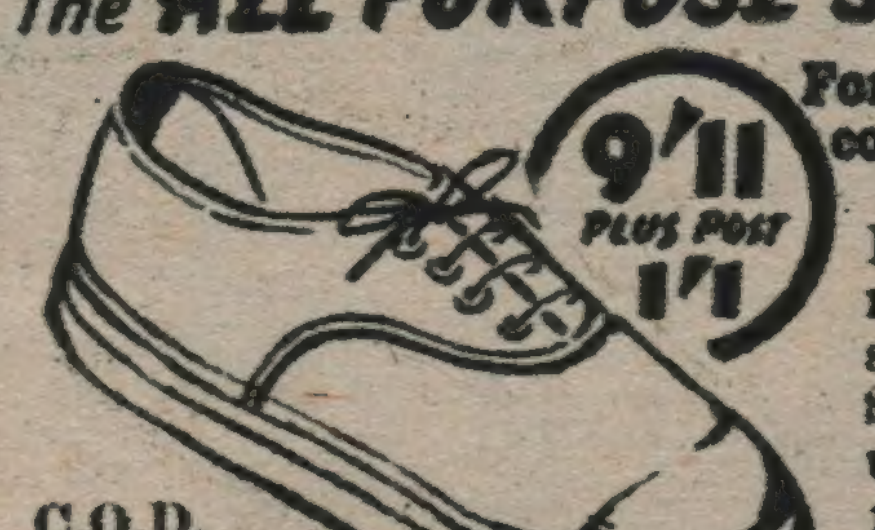

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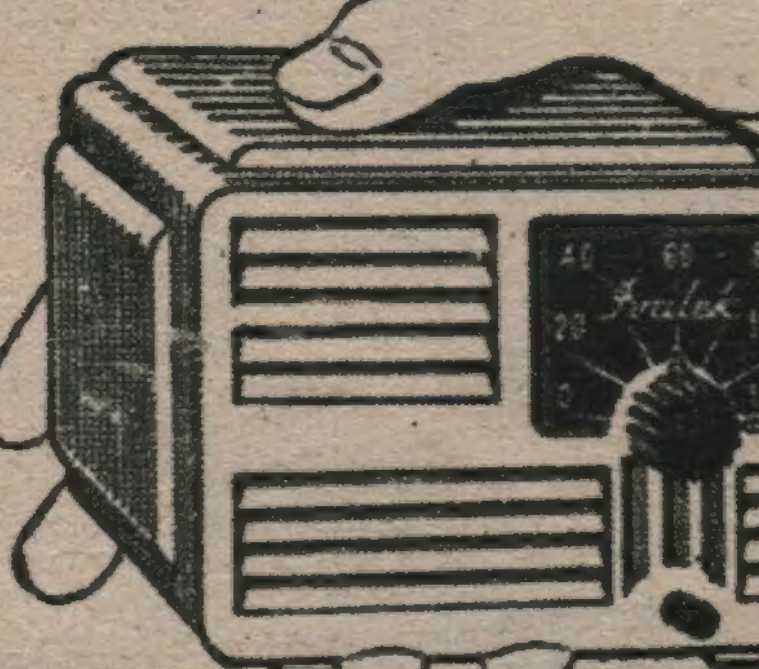

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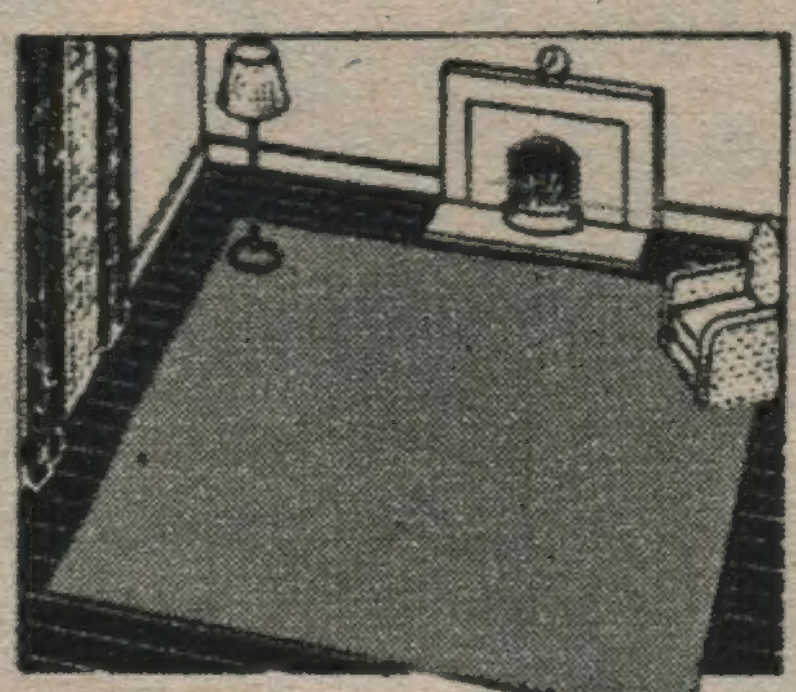

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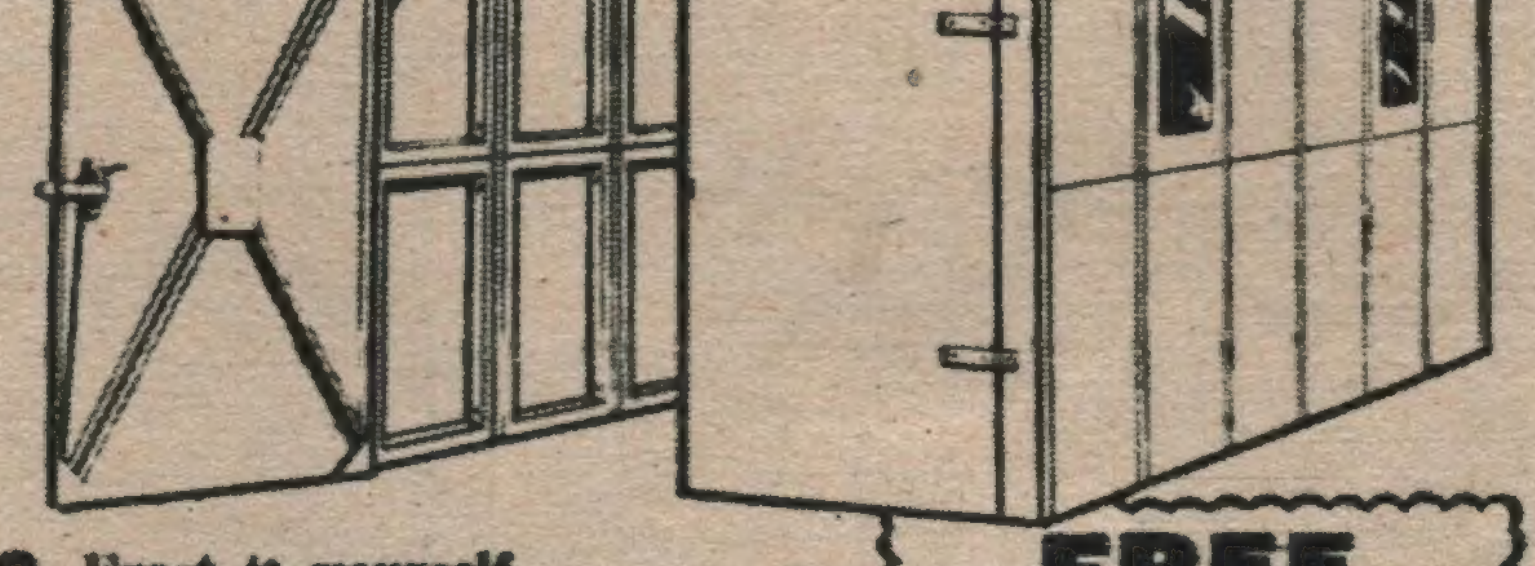

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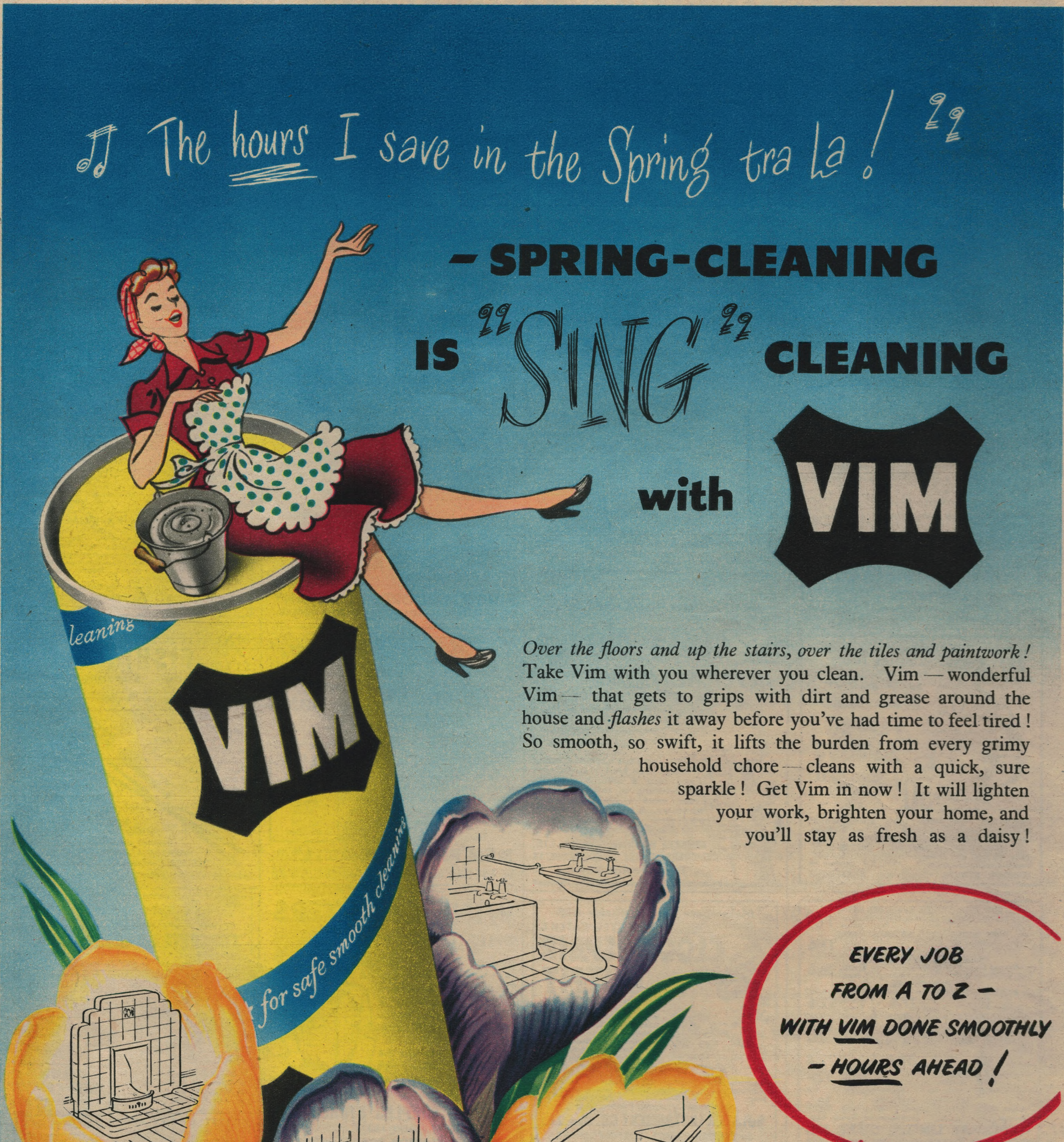
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